JESSICA CHASTAIN'S SECRET PAST

THE CAST OF *GIRLS* ON STUFF WE DEFINITELY CAN'T MENTION ON THIS COVER

Entertainment WEEKLY

JAN. 16, 2015 • #1346

Get Ready for Ant-Man

EXCLUSIVE First Look

TURN TO PAGE 30

On the set with **Paul Rudd,** the teeny-tiny star of Marvel's risky new movie. Inside its wild 10-year trip to the screen.

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THEY'LL BE THERE FOR YOU... ON NETFLIX
We guide you through all 10 seasons of the must-see TV show (starring Jennifer Aniston, David Schwimmer, Courteney Cox, Matt LeBlanc, Lisa Kudrow, and Matthew Perry)

(COVER) MAGNIFYING GLASS: VINCENZO LOMBARDO/GETTY IMAGES; (THIS PAGE) REISIG & TAYLOR/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK/GETTY IMAGES

ON THE COVER Paul Rudd photographed exclusively for EW by Michael Muller on Nov. 20, 2014, in Fayetteville, Ga. Ants: © Marvel 2015

Features

30 COVER *Ant-Man* Living large on the success of *Guardians of the Galaxy*, Marvel gets microscopic with its mightiest, mini-est superhero yet. But can star Paul Rudd and the studio turn this little guy into the next big thing? BY *CLARK COLLIS*

42 *Girls* What do Lena Dunham, Allison Williams, Zosia Mamet, and Jemima Kirke talk about over dinner? The usual: work, friends, hobbies, the future. Which, for them, means awkward sex scenes, a new *Star Wars* star, *Peter Pan Live!*, and the far-reaching fourth season of their lightning-rod HBO series, *Girls*. BY *SARA VILKOMERSON*

48 Jessica Chastain Since her knockout performance in *The Help* four years ago, Chastain has become one of the most startling actresses of her generation. Her brash turn in *A Most Violent Year* could earn her a third Oscar nod. But don't be fooled by her quiet poise. She's tougher than she looks. BY *JOE McGOVERN*

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ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY (ISSN 10490434) IS PUBLISHED WEEKLY EXCEPT FOR COMBINED ISSUES IN JANUARY, MARCH, APRIL, MAY, JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER BY ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY INC., A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF TIME INC. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: 135 W. 50TH ST., NEW YORK, NY 10020. MELISSA MATTIACE, PUBLISHER; JEFF BAIRSTOW, TREASURER. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY, AND ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. U.S. SUBSCRIPTIONS: $49.92 FOR ONE YEAR. CANADA POST PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 40110178. RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADA ADDRESSES TO POSTAL STN. A, P.O. BOX 4327, TORONTO, ON M5W 3H5. GST 88838162IRT0001. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY, POST OFFICE BOX 30608, TAMPA, FL 33630-0608, CALL 1-800-274-6800, OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.EW.COM/SUBSCRIBERSERVICES.
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Feedback

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May the Forecast Be With You

My sister got me a subscription to EW as a Christmas present, and my first issue was the **2015 Preview**. I really enjoyed all the movie, TV, and book previews. So much cool stuff that I am into, especially sci-fi. The only section I'm not into is music because it appears our tastes are exact opposites. Everything else is great, though. Keep up the good work.

JEFF SHIBLEY
Pasadena

Anthony Breznican's ***Star Wars*** article has created so much giddy anticipation for me that it will be difficult to wait a year until *The Force Awakens* comes out. His piece on the next chapter sets all of us fans up for a wonderfully star-filled galactic ride in which the future indeed looks very hopeful!

RUSSELL MOODY JR.
Philadelphia

I was really excited about the 2015 Preview issue—especially the TV section. However, seeing finales of shows such as *Mad Men* or returns of *Orphan Black* and *Community* highlighted was only overshadowed by the fact that no mention of ***Glee*** was included. *Glee* has changed many people's lives through its music and goofy humor. So where's the love?

DUSTIN HOLDEN
Memphis

I am eagerly awaiting the release of ***Blackhat***, and it is not because of **Chris Hemsworth**, even though most of the media focus is on him. I am going to see *Blackhat* because of **Wang Leehom**. He may not be well known to the American public, but he is famous throughout Asia for his many talents. Once *Blackhat* hits theaters, I hope that more people in the U.S. will start paying attention to Leehom. P.S. I have nothing against Chris Hemsworth.

THIEN-KIEU LAM
Addis, La.

Star Wars: The Force Awakens

Murder, She Wrote and Wrote and Wrote

Readers both young and old dug our binge on the Queen of Mystery, Agatha Christie

One novel that clearly should have been on your "great" list: *Endless Night* features neither Poirot nor Miss Marple but is far superior to the currently popular *Gone Girl*, with concluding paragraphs that will send chills up your spine.

BOB EWEN
Miami

Christie has been one of my favorite authors since I was 16. What I would have given to have traveled along the Nile or by train back in the day, just hoping Hercule might be around the corner, even if it meant death might not be far behind!

CLAIRE SHARPE
Lewisville, Tex.

This past summer I read *A Murder Is Announced* for the first time. I was still stumped! Thank you for doing the spread on this magnificent woman of fiction. Hopefully young kiddies everywhere will discover her treasures for the first time themselves.

APRIL TAVENER
London, Ontario

I'm currently in a Christie binge myself (thumbing through *Crooked House* as of today). No matter how many times you read her books, they always leave you with a sense of wonderment and awe at her incomparable capabilities as an author.

OSCAR AGUIRRE
Miami

Google It, Kidds

Just when I thought it wasn't possible to love Dalton Ross' column anymore he makes a reference to ***Kidd Video***. Best. Column. Ever!

KAREN SCHROEDER
Florence, Ky.

Delicious Art

I read EW the way I eat an Oreo cookie. I skip through it to get a taste, then I devour it in one sitting. I've subscribed from the beginning and I'm especially impressed by the artists who illustrate your magazine. Thanks for giving great artists a place to show off.

TIM PEEPLES
Charlotte, N.C.

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CHRISTIE: HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES; *STAR WARS: THE FORCE AWAKENS*: COURTESY OF DISNEY

GIRLS

SUN JAN 11 9PM HBO

OR WATCH IT ON HBO GO

Nowhere to grow but up

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Entertainment Weekly

UNLEASHED!

(Clockwise) Golden Globe nominees *Game of Thrones*, *Birdman*, and *How to Get Away With Murder*'s Viola Davis (far left); (top) hosts Tina Fey and Amy Poehler

EW.COM

Welcome to EW's Golden Globes Party

Prep the cocktail shaker and the deviled-egg trays. Hollywood's first big awards show of the year (emceed by ultimate hosts Tina Fey and Amy Poehler) airs Jan. 11 on NBC at 8 p.m. Join the second-screen fun at ***ew.com/goldenglobes*** as we live-blog the event. You'll also find style galleries, our picks for the best and worst moments, reports from the red carpet and the pressroom, and, of course, Amy and Tina's best jokes of the night. Keep up with EW on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for the latest happenings, shockers, and tweetworthy moments of the Golden Globes.

MOBILE

EW ON THE GO

Have EW, will travel. The digital edition includes bonus images from our photo shoot with the cast of *Girls*, and is packed with extras such as movie trailers, song samples, and book excerpts. To find it, download the Google Play Newsstand app, or go to Apple Newsstand or *ew.com/ewdigital*.

RADIO

EVERYBODY LOVES CHRIS

EW's Matt Bean sits down with the Mighty Thor, a.k.a. Chris Hemsworth, and director Michael Mann to discuss the pair's new thriller, *Blackhat*, on ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY Radio (SiriusXM Channel 105). Listen in on Jan. 15 at 6 p.m.

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FEY AND POEHLER: ART STREIBER/NBC; *GAME OF THRONES*: HELEN SLOAN/HBO; *BIRDMAN*: ALISON ROSA; *HOW TO GET AWAY WITH MURDER*: MITCH HAASETH/ABC; HEMSWORTH: DAVID LIVINGSTON/GETTY IMAGES

The Week's Best Soundbites

"I do not like to be sticky. Unless I'm with, like, a super-hot guy and then it's okay."
—Brandi Glanville, after getting hit in the face with a pie, on *The Celebrity Apprentice*

"Me? I'm sorry, Gareth. I am Mr. Butch—oh, poop! I got gravy on my tummy flowers!"
—King Richard (Timothy Omundson), trying to assert his masculinity, on *Galavant*

"I can't wait for those weird Sundance cast portraits where everyone is hugging each other in Sorel boots."
—Mindy Kaling via Twitter

"She said that I could plow her fields anytime. I don't know what that means—but I like it."
—Farmer Chris, extolling the virtues of contestant Kaitlyn, on *The Bachelor*

"There's nothing simpler than avoiding people you don't like. Avoiding one's friends: That's the real test."
—The Dowager Countess (Maggie Smith) on *Downton Abbey*

"When the slippers are filled, Terry is chilled."
—"Vacation Terry" (Terry Crews) on *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*

"I think I'll bake something for her before my Xanax wears off."
—Louise (Elena Satine), wanting to comfort Victoria (Madeleine Stowe), on *Revenge*

"You've got to get her in the game."

"I'm her body woman. Not her fluffer."
—Marissa (Sarah Steele) to Eli (Alan Cumming), after he tells her to prepare Alicia (Julianna Margulies) for a mock debate, on *The Good Wife*

KALING: AMANDA EDWARDS/WIREIMAGE.COM; CHRIS SOULES; CRAIG SJODIN/ABC; GLANVILLE: PATRICK RANDAK/NBC; OMUNDSON: NICK RAY/ABC; CREWS: MARY ELLEN MATTHEWS/FOX; SMITH: CARNIVAL FILM & TELEVISION LIMITED 2012 FOR *MASTERPIECE*; SATINE: DANNY FELD/ABC; CUMMING: JEFF NEUMANN/CBS; STEELE: JEFFERY NEIRA/CBS

THE BIGGEST LOSER

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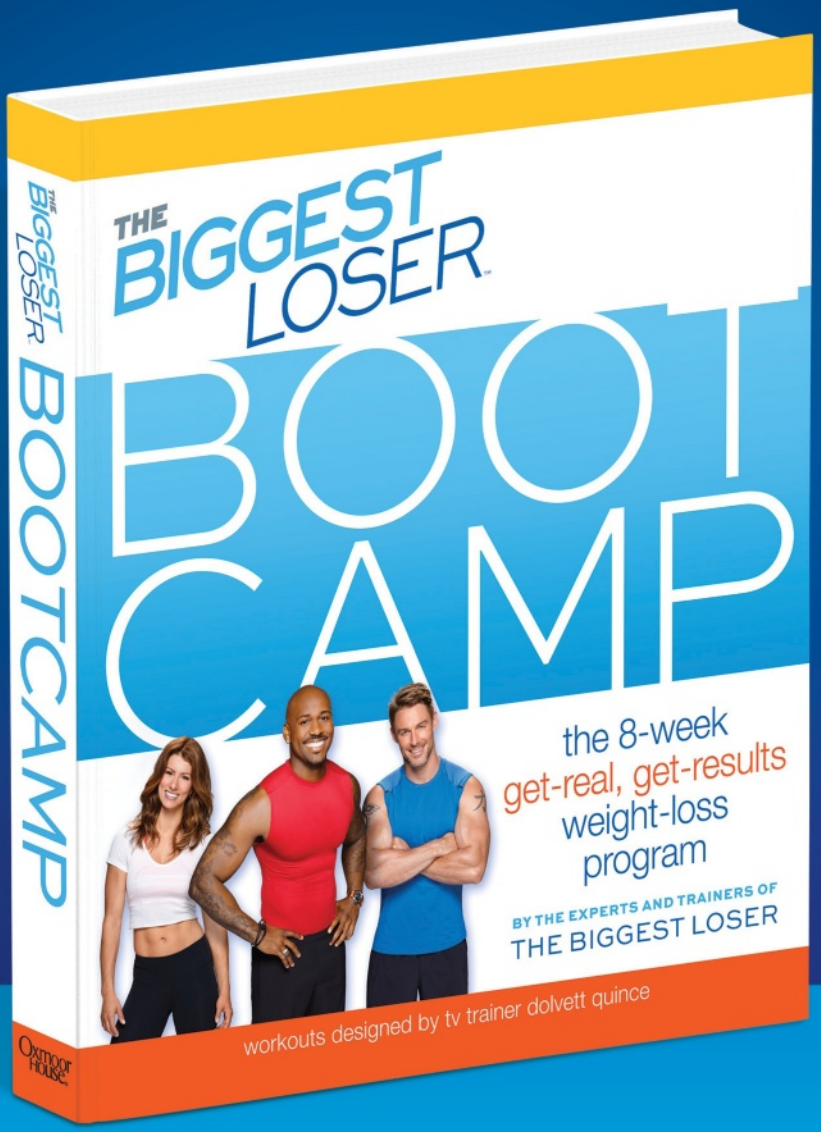
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THURSDAYS 8/7c NBC

*The **Top 10** Things We Love This Week*

The Must List

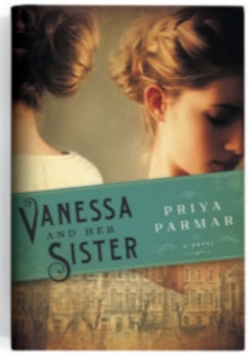
1 BROAD CITY

The girls are back in town! Abbi and Ilana are better (and weirder) than ever in season 2 of their hilariously absurd BFF comedy. Prep for sex, drugs, and Seth Rogen—and that's just in the premiere. *(Comedy Central, Wednesdays, 10:30 p.m.)*

Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson

2 WINTER SLEEP A grinch-ish hotel owner gets his ego thwacked in this Palme d'Or-winning drama. It's a slow burn—more than three hours—but it glows with honesty, including a painful and startlingly real brother-sister quarrel. *(NR)*

3 VANESSA AND HER SISTER, by Priya Parmar Fiction and history merge seamlessly in this dazzling novel about an incredible circle of bohemian artists in early-20th-century London—particularly the rivalry between two famous sisters, writer Virginia Woolf and painter Vanessa Bell.



4 PANDA BEAR MEETS THE GRIM REAPER, Panda Bear Not grim at all, actually—just a burbling, beautifully layered collection of psych-pop soundscapes from a standout member of indie darlings Animal Collective.

Illustration by **JESSE LENZ**

GLAZER: LANE SAVAGE/COMEDY CENTRAL; JACOBSON: LINDA KALLERUS/COMEDY CENTRAL; BACKGROUND: MATTHEW PEYTON; *WINTER SLEEP*: NURI BILGE CEYLAN; PANDA BEAR: STEVEN DEWALL/GETTY IMAGES

5 "TRY ME (REMIX)," DeJ Loaf feat. Jeezy and T.I.

The 23-year-old Detroit-bred rapper's viral hit gets an extra boost from two big-name stars, but her hypnotic, slo-mo flow—rhyming *pasta* with *impostor*? Why not!—still holds the spotlight.

6 EMPIRE Created by Danny Strong and *The Butler*'s Lee Daniels, Fox's soapy musical drama about a hip-hop dynasty features not only frothy fun but also a tour de force performance by Taraji P. Henson as ex-con matriarch Cookie Lyon. *(Fox, Wednesdays, 9 p.m.)*

7 "RAPTURE," Tropics The second track off multi-instrumentalist Chris Ward's—a.k.a. Tropics—forthcoming album, *Rapture* (out Feb. 17), is chillwave at its best: full and fragile, with delightfully synthy nostalgia.

8 BABYLON

Police shows are a dime a dozen, but the razor-sharp wit and class-A insults of Danny Boyle's *Babylon* make the London cop comedy-drama starring Brit Marling as a PR maven feel essential. Watch it now, or you'll binge it later. *(Sundance-TV, Thursdays, 10 p.m.)*

9 THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN, by Paula Hawkins

A lonely alcoholic becomes obsessed with the seemingly perfect lives of a golden couple whose house she passes on her daily commute. But is their story not as sweet as it looks? A gripping, down-the-rabbit-hole thriller.

10 WORKING GIRL Staten Island gal Tess McGill (Melanie Griffith) has a head for business, a bod for sin, and a serious addiction to Aqua Net in the late Mike Nichols' endearing and inspiring 1988 rom-com, now hitting Blu-ray for the first time *evah*. *(R)*

EMPIRE: CHUCK HODES/FOX; DEJ LOAF: CINDY ORD/GETTY IMAGES; TROPICS: EMILY BUCK; *BABYLON*: DEAN ROGERS/SUNDANCETV; *WORKING GIRL*: EVERETT COLLECTION

DON'T MISS THE BONE-CHILLING NOVEL THAT HAS THRILLER MASTERS RAVING:

WHITE PLAGUE

"JAMES ABEL reworks one of the great tragedies of the early 20th century into the material of a hard-driving thriller of the modern arctic. **Fast, well-written** entertainment wrapped around something to think about."—**JOHN SANDFORD**

"[ABEL] IS A MASTER OF THIS CHILLED UNIVERSE."—***KIRKUS REVIEWS***

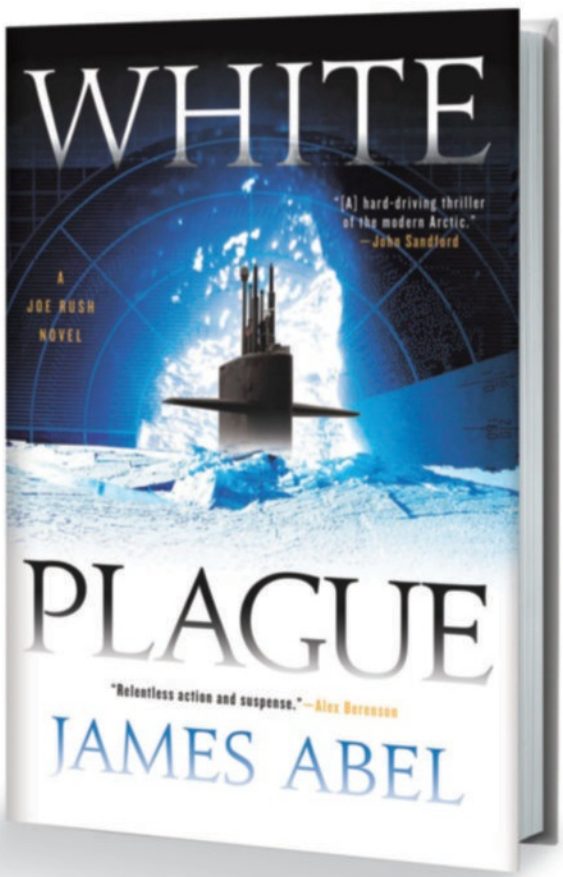
"A stunning thriller—it will have you on edge from its chilling start to its deadly denouement."—**LINDA FAIRSTEIN**

"Will make you shiver with both cold and terror. James Abel becomes your expert guide into the Arctic—and into a frightening scenario that's all too believable."—**TOM YOUNG**

"Evoking both Michael Crichton's medical thrillers and Tom Clancy's *The Hunt for Red October*, this is a very tightly written novel." —***BOOKLIST***

"FANS OF CRICHTON WILL ENJOY ABEL'S BONE-CHILLING THRILLER."
—**LISA GARDNER**

"RELENTLESS ACTION AND SUSPENSE."—**ALEX BERENSON**



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MADONNA'S NO GOOD, VERY BAD HOLIDAY [**P.** 18]

News+Notes

Tom Wilkinson and David Oyelowo in *Selma*

Front-runners Under Fire

If there's one thing we can expect during awards season, it's the onslaught of accusations that fact-based films are, well, less than factual. Here's the truth.

BIOPICS HAVE BEEN Oscar bait since 1930 when George Arliss won for his portrayal of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli in *Disraeli*, and Hollywood's fascination with the historical has yielded some of cinema's most celebrated performances—think *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Raging Bull*, *Coal Miner's Daughter*, *Amadeus*, *My Left Foot*, *Schindler's List*, *Boys Don't Cry*, *Erin Brockovich*, and *Ray*, to name just a few. But like the Mani Cam on the red carpet, it has become an integral part of Academy Awards season for historians (or competing films) to cry foul over factual details of Oscar contenders. Recent years saw *A Beautiful Mind*, *The King's Speech*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, and *Lincoln* go through the reality-check wringer. With so many based-on-a-true-story hopefuls vying for a trophy on Feb. 22, this year looks to be no different. Here, we delve into the primary points of contention regarding four Best Picture front-runners.

MADONNA: JAMIE MCCARTHY/GETTY IMAGES; *SELMA*: ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA

SELMA

Selma has won critical raves, including from EW, for its depiction of Martin Luther King Jr. and the crucial 50-mile civil rights march from the titular small Alabama town to the state capitol in March 1965. But the stirring and tense historical drama has also drawn the ire of some historians and members of President Lyndon Johnson's administration who resent the way that LBJ is portrayed in director Ava DuVernay's film.

IN THE MOVIE President Johnson (Tom Wilkinson) is mistrustful of King's agenda and rejects his urgent pleas for federal legislation that will secure and protect minorities' right to vote. He resents King's meddling activism and needs to be dragged to a point of acquiescence before taking up the cause.

IN REALITY Just before his 1965 inauguration, Johnson spoke with King by phone and said the following:

"If you can find the worst condition that you run into in Alabama, Mississippi, or Louisiana, or South Carolina...and if you just take that one illustration and get it on radio and get it on television and get it in the pulpits...pretty soon the fellow that didn't do anything but follow...[he'll] say, 'Well, that's not right. That's not fair.'... And then that will help us on what we're going to shove through in the end."

DuVernay has responded to the criticism with a tweet: "Notion that Selma was LBJ's idea is jaw dropping and offensive to [civil rights groups] and black citizens who made it so." As evidence, she referred to a 2013 *New Yorker* story by Louis Menand that includes this passage:

"Johnson recognized the need for additional voting-rights legislation, and he directed Nicholas Katzenbach, soon to be his attorney general, to draft it.... But then progress slowed. Johnson had the most ambitious legislative agenda of any President since F.D.R. (his idol), and he explained to King that he was worried that Southern opposition to more civil rights legislation would drain support from the War on Poverty and hold up bills on Medicare, immigration reform, and aid to education. He asked King to wait. King thought that if you waited for the right time for direct action (as nonviolent protests were called) you would never act. So on Jan. 2, 1965, he went to Selma."

Andrew Young, who was close to King during the Selma marches and went on to become a U.S. congressman and Atlanta mayor, told *The Washington Post* that King and Johnson's relationship "was the only thing I would question in the movie. Everything else, they got 100 percent right." —*Jeff Labrecque*

(Clockwise from top) Steve Carell and Channing Tatum in *Foxcatcher*; Keira Knightley and Benedict Cumberbatch in *The Imitation Game*; Reese Witherspoon in *Wild*

THE IMITATION GAME

The life of mathematician and cryptanalyst Alan Turing is depicted as a stream of tragedy and triumph in *The Imitation Game*. With Benedict Cumberbatch in the lead role, the film centers on Turing's difficulties concealing his homosexuality at a time when it was against the law, and his relationships with co-workers as he tries to crack Enigma, the German military code machine.

IN THE MOVIE On the hunt for new recruits, Turing and MI6 set up a contest to bring young talent to Bletchley Park, the site of the U.K.'s Government Code and Cypher School. Sole female entrant Joan Clarke (Keira Knightley) is the only person in the room to solve a crossword puzzle in under six minutes, winning her a job.

IN REALITY Clarke was already at Bletchley Park doing clerical work. She had studied math at Cambridge and then joined Hut 8, the Bletchley Park group led by Turing at the time. According to biographer Andrew Hodges, Clarke had even met Turing at Cambridge before the two started working together. —*Teresa Jue*

FOXCATCHER

In Bennett Miller's stark film *Foxcatcher*, wrestler Mark Schultz (Channing Tatum)

FOXCATCHER: SCOTT GARFIELD; WILD: ANNE MARIE FOX; THE IMITATION GAME: JACK ENGLISH

is a desperate man, looking for glory and for someone to guide him toward it. Schultz's strange entanglement with John du Pont (Steve Carell)—the rich heir who becomes his benefactor—ultimately leads to the murder of Schultz's brother, Dave (Mark Ruffalo), at du Pont's Foxcatcher estate.

IN THE MOVIE Schultz and du Pont have an intense relationship and du Pont has a preoccupation with Schultz that can be read as sexual. A non-platonic connection is only implied but never depicted.

IN REALITY Du Pont, who died in prison in 2010, did seem to harbor a fixation on Schultz and other wrestlers. In Schultz's 2014 memoir, *Foxcatcher: The True Story of My Brother's Murder, John du Pont's Madness, and the Quest for Olympic Gold*, he describes a wrestling move du Pont created called the "Foxcatcher Five," which consisted of "grabbing someone's balls with five fingers." Schultz also writes that he "should have reported John to the athletic director."

Schultz, who initially supported the film, had a change of heart in December after reading film critics' reviews that interpreted his relationship with du Pont as sexual. He blasted Miller via Twitter ("DIRECTOR BENNETT MILLER IS A LYING ASSHOLE!!!!!!") but later backed off (sort of) on Facebook: "While I may have tweeted out of anger, I in no way regret standing up for myself, nor do I regret calling out the only other man who has had decision making power concerning my image and legacy these past years."
—Esther Zuckerman

WILD

Screenwriter Nick Hornby did an elegant job of consolidating Cheryl Strayed's memoir about hiking the Pacific Crest Trail, and for the most part, the film is true to the book—though there is one detour from reality that we're on board with.

IN THE MOVIE A woman drops Cheryl off in Mojave, Calif., at the beginning of her trip.

IN REALITY A man dropped her off—but there's a good reason for the change: In the film, the woman is played by Strayed herself, in a cameo appearance.
—Esther Zuckerman

MONEYBALL: MELINDA SUE GORDON; *ARGO*: CLAIRE FOLGER; *12 YEARS A SLAVE*: FRANCOIS DUHAMEL; *BIG EYES*: LEAH GALLO

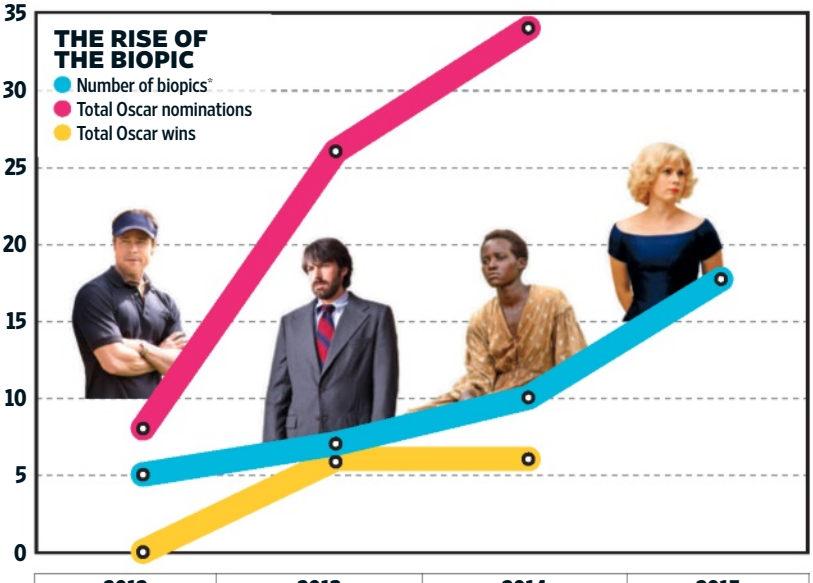
THE YEAR OF THE BIOPIC BLOWOUT

Feel like the theaters are packed with more biopics than ever? You're right. In this year's rush for Oscar gold, fact-based flicks have taken over. *—Chris Lee*

Call it a tipping point in film history. This awards season, as part of Hollywood's presentation of its most prestigious fare, a banner number of biographical films hit theaters. It's a trend that's been slowly gaining momentum for nearly 10 years, and one that speaks to a kind of cultural shift in what constitutes an Important Movie these days. Historically, lush adaptations of beloved and best-selling novels were a surefire way to attract audiences (and Oscar votes), but true-story films are now de rigueur. "The truth is stranger than fiction. A real story creates a link with the audience," says David Klawans, an independent producer who helped develop biographical material into such films as *Argo*, *Nacho Libre*, and the upcoming George Clooney-produced *Coronado High*. "A film with a historical context, something you've never heard of, something based on fact—it's fresh. And those all seem to come out during Oscar season now."

The trend shows no signs of slowing. This year we'll see a number of high-profile biopics: Joseph Gordon-Levitt delivers a star turn playing high-wire artist Philippe Petit in *The Walk* (due out Oct. 2); the rise and fall of gangsta-rap firebrands N.W.A is chronicled in *Straight Outta Compton* (Aug. 14); and British actor Tom Hiddleston attempts to channel country crooner Hank Williams in *I Saw the Light*. Further down the road, Danny Boyle's Steve Jobs biopic is expected to start filming this spring, and Martin Scorsese is reportedly prepping a take on the Ramones.

"Sometimes it is the people who no one imagines anything of who do the things that no one can imagine," Keira Knightley's character says in *The Imitation Game*, this year's dramatic biopic about WWII code breaker Alan Turing. The irony? In a town that prides itself on placing a high premium on imagination, conventional wisdom is pointing toward appropriating the preexisting stories of real-life people.



2012	2013	2014	2015
Just five biopics fought for the spotlight, and of the total eight Oscar nominations the genre earned, six went to ***Moneyball***.	Nominations for biopics skyrocketed thanks to Academy love for *Lincoln*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, and ***Argo***, the latter of which took three trophies.	The season's 10 true-story movies earned a whopping 34 Oscar nominations, led by ***12 Years a Slave*** with nine nods (and three wins).	With strong contenders such as *Selma*, ***Big Eyes***, *Wild*, and 15 others, Jan. 15's nominations are likely to bend to the biopic.

*Released August through December

THE FIRST COUPLE OF COMICS

Kelly Sue DeConnick and husband **Matt Fraction** have written iconic comic-book versions of such classic superheroes as Iron Man, Captain Marvel, and Hawkeye. Now they're moving away from the industry's established houses and focusing on the brave new world of creator-owned books. **BY KAT WARD**

"YOU ARE TALKING to adults dressed in onesies," the wife announces midconversation. "Big, giant, adult onesies," confirms the husband. This comic-book power couple, Kelly Sue DeConnick and Matt Fraction, are camped out in zip-up pj's among piles of books in the Portland, Ore., home their two children have just vacated for school. This sounds like a surprisingly prosaic (if cozy) morning for people whose minds are constantly flitting off to distant galaxies or warping through the time-space continuum and giving Death a daughter or gender-bending a classical hero. Stuff like that.

DeConnick and Fraction (or DeFraction, their family portmanteau) are known for each bringing his or her own inventive, sly voice and boundless imagination to some of the comic-book pantheon's most beloved superheroes, including writing two of Marvel's most critically acclaimed titles of recent years. Fraction's stint on *Hawkeye*, which is wrapping up shortly, examined what the Avenger got up to when he was off world-saving duty. And DeConnick gave long-standing character Carol Danvers a promotion to Captain Marvel, giving new life to a cult favorite who in 2018 is slated to be the first female Marvel superhero to carry her own film. "I was gobsmacked," says DeConnick. "I wasn't even watching the event [when the film was announced]. My mentions tab on Twitter just went nuts. I didn't know what to do with myself."

The couple expanded their union beyond matrimony with the founding of their company, Milkfed Criminal Masterminds, in 2008. They've yet to collaborate on a project, but they see their work as very much a partnership. "Our marriage is kind of the cornerstone of this little empire of ours," says Fraction. Currently that empire encompasses a wide range of their creator-owned projects, which are now

(From top) *Hawkeye* by Fraction and David Aja; *Captain Marvel* by DeConnick and David Lopez; *ODY-C* by Fraction and Christian Ward

their focus as they move on from the comic industry's big publishers, Marvel and DC Comics. *ODY-C*, a new series by Fraction that launched in November, takes Homer's classic tale, flips it upside down, and sends it into space. A female protagonist, Odyssia, leads a quest given epic life by artist Christian Ward's kaleidoscopic art. "I wanted to give my daughter a great hero," Fraction says of the gender swap. "Who's a greater hero than Odysseus?"

DeConnick followed up with the December launch of her second ongoing original series, *Bitch Planet*, which is set on a prison planet for women deemed "noncompliant"—everyone from feminists to minorities to those not conforming to gender norms. "It's not as camp as I had intended. I had very broad humor plans," she notes of the series, which she developed with artist Valentine De Landro. "It was supposed to be so crazy! *Future-y!*" Though otherworldly, it paints a more realistic picture than DeConnick originally envisioned. "It feels like just a couple years down the line in the wrong direction," she says.

And in case it seems like the couple aren't juggling enough projects, Fraction's most beloved series, *Casanova*, returns in January, following the titular time-traveling, womanizing, universe-hopping superspy whose comic-book antics are often described as "on acid." This time around he'll have an A-list contributor. "It will be nice to be the sane one on Team Casanova," Fraction says, referring to the addition of Pulitzer Prize-winning author Michael Chabon, a *Casanova* fanboy who is now penning backups (think of them as side stories) for the series. "It became this game of chicken, and neither one of us has flinched," says Fraction of the collaboration. "I was chiding him to write more comics and he said the only comics he wants to write are *Casanova* backups. And I was like, 'Your script's due Monday.'" Chabon is not the only one inspired by the duo's work. Both writers have enthusiastic fan groups, whether it's Captain Marvel's Carol Corps or fans of the *Sex Criminals* series, who have created a wealth of fan works shared over social media. "It's nice to have this kind of traveling community," says DeConnick. "We're excited about the same stuff, trying to encourage each other and be human together."

Their work life (and Tumblrs) might be overflowing with the inventive creations of comics fans, but within the DeFraction household, there's a much tougher audience. "It's starting to dawn on [the kids] that it's not a regular job," Fraction says. What tipped them off? Finding out their parents are friendly with the cast of *MythBusters*. "Our son was like, '*You know the MythBusters?!*'" says DeConnick. "I think it was the first time we've ever really impressed him." ■

HOLY POWER COUPLES, BATMAN!

Turns out the comic industry is ripe with kick-ass couples whose work is worth checking out

→TERRY AND RACHEL DODSON

Artist Terry has worked on a wide range of notable characters, like Wonder Woman, Spider-Man, and the Avengers, while wife Rachel works as an inker, often alongside her husband.

→MIKE AND LAURA ALLRED

Artist Mike and colorist Laura often collaborate, as they did on the *iZombie* title co-created by Mike and soon to be adapted into a TV show for The CW.

→WALTER AND LOUISE SIMONSON

One of the original comic-book couples, writer-editor Louise and artist-writer Walter have worked on titles for both Marvel and DC since they began their careers in the '70s.

→STUART AND KATHRYN IMMONEN

Writer Kathryn and writer-artist Stuart have contributed to Marvel and DC and co-created their own graphic novel, *Moving Pictures*.

→AMANDA CONNER AND JIMMY PALMIOTTI

Extensive comics résumés for writer-artists Conner and Palmiotti include collaborations on the *Power Girl* and *Harley Quinn* series for DC and projects for their company, PaperFilms.

DECONNICK AND FRACTION: ED PETERSON; *HAWKEYE*, *CAPTAIN MARVEL*: COURTESY OF MARVEL (2); *ODY-C*: IMAGE COMICS; *IZOMBIE*: DC ENTERTAINMENT

Princess Di gets the *Rebel Heart* treatment on Instagram

INSTA-IMPLOSION

In early 2014, Instagram was Madonna's friend, and she used it to update fans on her upcoming album, *Rebel Heart*. But when unapproved new music appeared online during the holidays, the icon had to completely rearrange her release strategy. And all of *that* happened before the cover-art-meme controversy currently plaguing her. Here's how it went down. **—KYLE ANDERSON**

Nov. 28
Two songs purported to be from Madonna's upcoming release surface online. Manager Guy Oseary tweets, "I would be grateful to any @madonna fans that can assist us in finding those responsible for the leak. We appreciate your help."

Dec. 4
Madonna posts a photo of a smashed iPod, writing, "My music has been stolen and leaked! I have been violated as a human and an artist!"

Dec. 17
Oseary's plea fails to produce an offender, and 13 Madonna tracks arrive online in various states of completion, coming from an album rumored to be titled *Iconic* or *Unapologetic Bitch*. Madonna declares them "unfinished demos stolen long ago" and declares the leak "artistic rape."

Dec. 20
Madonna officially announces the new album, which is called *Rebel Heart* and will be released on March 10. The iTunes pre-order comes with six tracks available for instant download, including the first single, "Living for Love." Producers include Kanye West, Diplo, and Avicii. *Rebel Heart* tops iTunes charts in more than 35 countries.

Dec. 21
After *Rebel Heart* cover-art memes begin to surface, with people wrapping black wire around their faces, Madonna tells *Billboard* that the leaks have completely changed the way her team operates. "We're not on the Internet," she said. "Hard drives of music are hand-carried to people." She also teases a possible performance at the Grammy Awards.

Dec. 23
Another 14 unauthorized demos arrive, including the Pharrell Williams collaboration "Back That Up (Do It)."

Dec. 24
Three more songs appear, including a track called "Two Steps Behind Me" that sounds so much like a Lady Gaga dis track that Madonna is forced to address it. "We still live in a world that discriminates against women," she said via Instagram three days later. "Their are People that are so hateful. they want to create feuds between strong women that do not exist! I do not wish ill will towards any other female artist and i never have!... i will not apologize Or defend my unpublished, unfinished, STOLEN work."

Dec. 27
Oseary reveals on Twitter that the original plan was to release *Rebel Heart* at the end of April, and that Madonna recorded so many demos because it was meant to be a double album.

Jan. 2
Madonna apologizes for posting photos of Nelson Mandela, Jesus Christ, and Jean-Michel Basquiat getting the *Rebel Heart* meme treatment. "I'm sorry," she wrote on Facebook. "I'm not comparing my self to anyone." As of press time, the leaks have stopped, but their source remains a mystery.

WATCH THIS › DRINK THAT
GOLDEN GLOBES EDITION

Awards Buzz(ed)

Stars and spectators alike know the Golden Globe Awards are the boozi-est of Hollywood accolades, with a dinner-party format and free-flowing cocktails. Watching from home? Don't feel left out—just mix this made-for-EW bubbly cocktail and join the party! *—Jeffery Lindenmuth*

Golden Statue Cocktail
Created by Daiano Morassi of Mr. C Beverly Hills

2 cups fresh-squeezed grapefruit juice
2 1/2 cups prosecco
6 oz. vodka
4 oz. simple syrup
4 oz. triple sec

› Add all ingredients to a large pitcher with ice and stir gently. Pour into a highball glass or strain into a tall champagne glass. Top off with more prosecco as needed. *(Serves 4)*

BONUS

The One-Rule Drinking Game
Every time an actor you've never heard of appears to promote an NBC show you've never watched, take a sip.

GOLDEN GLOBE: COURTESY OF THE HOLLYWOOD FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION; CHAMPAGNE: STOCKFOOD/GETTY IMAGES

A SURPRISE BEST-SELLER

A tiny Brooklyn publishing house printed a 50,000-copy run of the Senate torture report—and it's flying off shelves faster than *The Goldfinch*. **—KAT WARD**

On Dec. 9, 2014, the Senate Intelligence Committee released a low-quality PDF of its investigation into the torture of CIA prisoners during the Bush administration. Melville House, an independent Brooklyn-based publisher with just 15 employees, took it upon itself to transform that document into a print book. "We basically had to retype the whole thing," says cofounder Dennis Johnson. Fourteen interns, freelancers, and volunteers joined the company's team to reset and proof the 525-page executive summary in five days. (They also created a fully searchable e-book.) Fellow publishers and booksellers provided supplies to keep them going, Johnson says. "Riverhead Books sent us cookies and Harper Perennial sent a case of champagne."

An initial print run of 50,000 books has already been shipped to stores, libraries, and universities, with a reprint of 20,000 copies now under way. "That's a lot of books for any sized publisher to do in a first printing, even a giant house," notes Johnson. "That represents us putting out a lot of money just to print them." Retail sales numbers aren't yet available, but the enthusiasm from booksellers, including Amazon and Barnes & Noble, is heartening. "We're feeling good," says Johnson, who finally got to enjoy a glass of that champagne. "We waited until we were finished before imbibing. When you've been up 24 hours, it's really not a good idea to have a drink!"

STUART SCOTT
1965–2015

An ESPN Anchor's Long History Of Quiet Bravery

BY KEITH OLBERMANN

THE PERSONAL COURAGE Stuart Scott showed in daily victories over cancer that filled nearly all of the eight years that ended with his passing on Jan. 4 cannot be overstated.

But the origin of that courage can be *under*stated. And it has been.

That with which he fought the scourge—and before it, the eye problems that threatened his career—did not come as the happier and noble part of some kind of cosmic package deal. Long before his illness, this man was as professionally and personally courageous as anybody I've ever worked with in sports.

In the '90s, sports broadcasting had a dramatic stylistic shift—from stentorian to stand-up—and in the race to be different, everybody wound up being the same.

Even Stu. His first few years at ESPN were solid and inventive, and interchangeable with two dozen other guys. And then one day he began to put himself into his scripts: his own personality, his own phrasing, and soon, the personality and phrasing of his upbringing and his heritage.

In a sea of sportscasters looking for the next new catchphrase, he began to find his, in what African-Americans had said to each other for three centuries.

That sea fought back. He got quizzical looks from colleagues. He got hate mail from viewers. He got blowback from management. And instead of taking the easy route of toning it down, or the explosive route of fighting back, he took a quietly brave one: He explained it. In a long and thoughtful piece on our then-embryonic website, he thanked ESPN for enabling him to mix in parts of America that it had rarely incorporated, to invoke not just funny phrases and cultural code but also the call-and-response dialogues of the black church.

He did far more than just preserve his own style. He opened a door to a reinvigoration of sports language—and closed one on a disconnect between many of the athletes, many of the fans, and those of us who chronicle them all.

On the air Stu often asked for a "witness from the congregation." He got that, and he got far, far more. The courage he employed in the insular world of television—long before he needed it to confront his disease—helped the many congregations of sports come together as one, and made us all witnesses.

ESPN's Keith Olbermann had the privilege of introducing Stuart Scott on Scott's first sportscast there on Oct. 1, 1993

SCOTT: RICH ARDEN/ESPN IMAGES; SCOTT AND OLBERMANN: LARRY BUSACCA/GETTY IMAGES FOR PALEY CENTER FOR MEDIA

DARREN FRANICH
→ SENIOR WRITER

THE MOST IMPORTANT BAD MOVIE OF THE YEAR

The Interview inspired cyberwarfare, yes, but it also illustrated how few films (and filmmakers) take on the real world anymore

THE INTERVIEW **IS** terrible, and you should see it right now. Almost every joke is bad and gets repeated 10 times. But at least *The Interview* sort of resembles contemporary reality. Right now that's radical. This Christmas, Hollywood's major movies were set in a magic dwarf kingdom, a magic forest, and a magic museum where actors cash magic paychecks.

A lot of things happened in 2014: Hello, understatement! And the movies of 2014 ran like mad from the world. We expect this from escapist blockbusters, but now even our finest filmmakers are staging a collective retreat.

Remember the indie revolution? A fleet of young directors—Darren Aronofsky, Quentin Tarantino, Christopher Nolan, and Paul Thomas Anderson—captured our time and place. Now Aronofsky's gone biblical. Nolan's lost in space. Anderson has stoner California before personal computers, and Tarantino's borne back ceaselessly into the West.

We are living in the golden age of mass-market allegories. The latest *Hunger Games* and *Captain America* were "political" movies, to the extent that it's become "political" to argue that fascism really isn't cool, bro. And some of the best movies of the year tackled reality through fantasy's prism. *Snowpiercer* allegorized socioeconomic disparities. *Under the Skin* allegorized sexual-assault culture. *John Wick* allegorized the financial crisis. No, it didn't, but movies don't need to be about anything. And filmmakers can always say that their movies are speaking to universal truths. "For indeed," says the philosopher, "mustn't we all someday go...into the woods?"

It's been five years since *The Hurt Locker*—the last Best Picture set in anything like the real present world—captured the high-strung abstraction of modern warfare. You have to wonder if this cinema of retreat is why movies don't drive the cultural conversation much now. And don't kid yourself that TV is any better: Two of our most popular shows are *Game of Thrones*, where British people hang out with dragons, and *The Walking Dead*, where British people do hilarious Southern accents.

Not to over-glorify the past, but in the 1970s great films crackled with the thrill of the now: *Network*, *The French Connection*, *All the President's Men*. Those were movies worthy of international cyberwarfare. Yet here we are: Seth Rogen and James Franco have made a lazily written, barely edited movie about dick jokes—a movie that, for the first half hour, is just an episode of *Entourage* without the intrinsic tension of Jeremy Piven's hairline—and that's the movie the President of the United States is talking about.

I salute them. There's one great sequence where Randall Park (as Kim Jong-un) and Franco (as Ryan Seacrest, basically) ride a tank. They blast the gun; they blast Katy Perry; they get blasted. There's so much to soak up in that scene: the linkage of celebrity decadence to totalitarianism, the notion that fascism is bro culture with the safety off, the vaguely feminist self-esteem anthem reimagined as a vaguely sociopathic paean to narcissism.

Was any of this intentional? Probably not; you get the sense that nobody attached to *The Interview* actually has anything to say about North Korea. But at least they're saying it loudly. At least they gave 2014 a movie about 2014. ■

FRANICH: PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER BEYER

Illustration by **ANNIE WU**

Chart Attack

A new year dawns with hobbits, football, and—surprise!—Taylor Swift. **BY KAT WARD**

326K

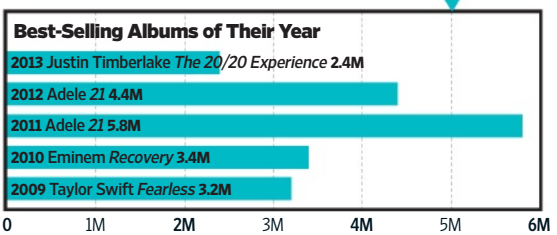
COPIES OF *1989* SOLD IN ITS NINTH WEEK OF SALES*

TOP ALBUMS
WEEK ENDING DEC. 29

1. **1989** TAYLOR SWIFT
2. **The Young OG Project** FABOLOUS
3. **2014 Forest Hills Drive** J. COLE
4. **The Pinkprint** NICKI MINAJ
5. **Guardians of the Galaxy: Awesome Mix Vol. 1** VARIOUS ARTISTS
6. **That's Christmas to Me** PENTATONIX
7. **Four** ONE DIRECTION
8. **x** ED SHEERAN
9. **Frozen** VARIOUS ARTISTS
10. **AM** ARCTIC MONKEYS

SOURCE: ITUNES

▲ *It was a photo finish for top album in 2014, with Swift's 1989 just barely beating out Frozen with 3.7M to the soundtrack's 3.5M. Here's how Swift stacks up against past best-sellers.*



*'*1989*'S CLOSEST COMPETITOR ON THE ITUNES CHARTS IS THE NEW FABOLOUS ALBUM, WHICH HOLDS THE SECOND SPOT WITH JUST 66K IN SALES ITS FIRST WEEK

TOP SONGS
WEEK ENDING DEC. 29

1. **Blank Space** TAYLOR SWIFT
2. **Uptown Funk** MARK RONSON
3. **Take Me to Church** HOZIER
4. **Lips Are Movin** MEGHAN TRAINOR
5. **Thinking Out Loud** ED SHEERAN
6. **All About That Bass** MEGHAN TRAINOR
7. **Shake It Off** TAYLOR SWIFT
8. **Centuries** FALL OUT BOY
9. **Animals** MAROON 5
10. **I'm Not the Only One** SAM SMITH

SOURCE: ITUNES

TOP BROADCAST-TV SHOWS
WEEK ENDING DEC. 28

1. **Sunday Night Football** NBC
2. **The OT** FOX
3. **60 Minutes Presents: Inside the Vatican** CBS
4. **Undercover Boss** CBS
5. **Mike & Molly** CBS
6. **The Mentalist** CBS
7. **Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas** ABC
8. **The Great Christmas Light Fight** ABC
9. **The Year: 2014** ABC
10. **Shrek the Halls** ABC

SOURCE: NIELSEN

▲ *11M viewers tuned in for 60 Minutes' profile of Pope Francis and peek into the Vatican.*

THIS WEEK IN LOCAL

TOP RECORDS GRIMEY'S, NASHVILLE
WEEK ENDING JAN. 4

1. **Metamodern Sounds in Country Music** STURGILL SIMPSON
2. **Lazaretto** JACK WHITE
3. **Southeastern** JASON ISBELL
4. **Turn Blue** THE BLACK KEYS
5. **Half the City** ST. PAUL & THE BROKEN BONES
6. **Morning Phase** BECK
7. **Ryan Adams** RYAN ADAMS
8. **Lost in the Dream** THE WAR ON DRUGS
9. **Remedy** OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW
10. **Swimmin' Time** SHOVELS & ROPE

SOURCE: GRIMEY'S

TOP HARDCOVER FICTION
WEEK ENDING DEC. 28

1. **All the Light We Cannot See** ANTHONY DOERR
2. **Gray Mountain** JOHN GRISHAM
3. **The Goldfinch** DONNA TARTT
4. **Redeployment** PHIL KLAY
5. **Lila** MARILYNNE ROBINSON
6. **Revival** STEPHEN KING
7. **The Bone Clocks** DAVID MITCHELL
8. **The Escape** DAVID BALDACCI
9. **The Boston Girl** ANITA DIAMANT
10. **Blue Horses** MARY OLIVER

SOURCE: AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION; RANKINGS ACCORDING TO THE INDIE BESTSELLER LIST, BASED ON SALES IN INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE

TOP HARDCOVER NONFICTION
WEEK ENDING DEC. 28

1. **Yes Please** AMY POEHLER
2. **Killing Patton** BILL O'REILLY & MARTIN DUGARD
3. **Being Mortal** ATUL GAWANDE
4. **Not That Kind of Girl** LENA DUNHAM
5. **Make It Ahead** INA GARTEN
6. **Small Victories** ANNE LAMOTT
7. **41: A Portrait of My Father** GEORGE W. BUSH
8. **Everything I Need to Know I Learned From a Little Golden Book** DIANE MULDROW
9. **What If?** RANDALL MUNROE
10. **The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up** MARIE KONDO

SOURCE: AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION; RANKINGS ACCORDING TO THE INDIE BESTSELLER LIST, BASED ON SALES IN INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE

TOP MOVIES
JAN. 2–4

1. **The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies** $21.7*
2. **Into the Woods** $18.7
3. **Unbroken** $18.2
4. **The Woman in Black 2: Angel of Death** $15
5. **Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb** $14.5
6. **Annie** $11.3
7. **The Imitation Game** $7.8
8. **The Hunger Games: Mockingjay—Part 1** $7.6
9. **The Gambler** $6.3
10. **Big Hero 6** $4.8

SOURCE: BOX OFFICE MOJO; *DOMESTIC GROSS IN MILLIONS

▲ *The final Hobbit movie spent its third week at No. 1, lifting its total box office to 221M.*

SWIFT: CHELSEA LAUREN/WIREIMAGE.COM; POPE FRANCIS: CHUNG SUNG-JUN/GETTY IMAGES; *THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES*: MARK POKORNY

BINGE! Friends

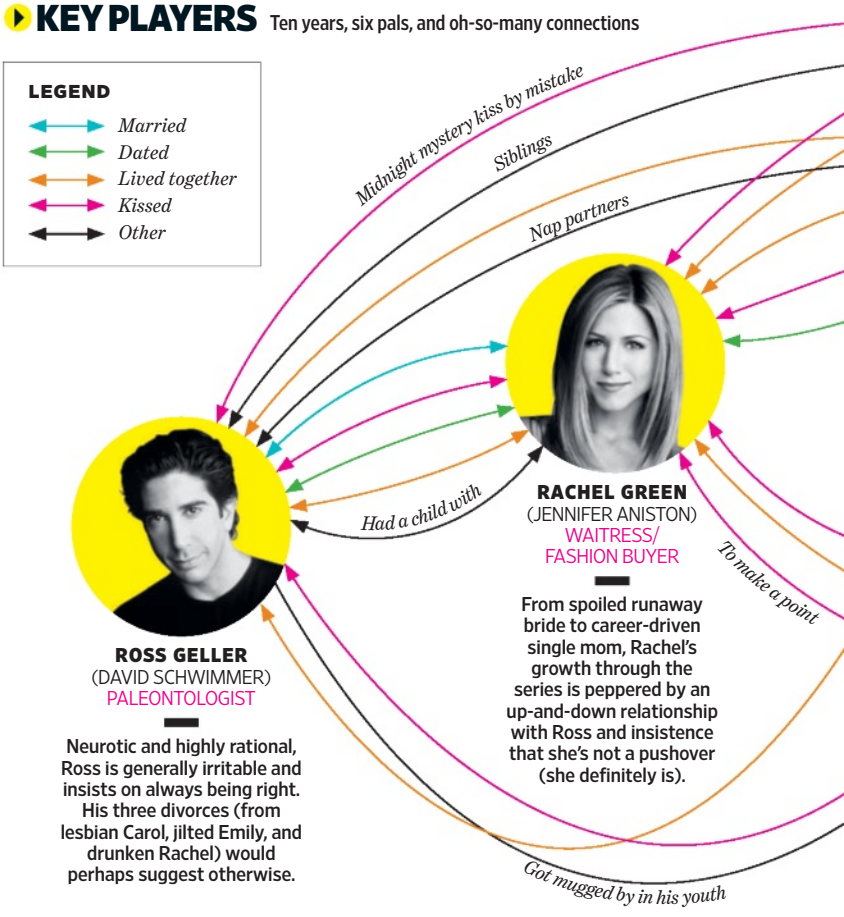
NO ONE TOLD YOU LIFE WAS GONNA BE THIS WAY? CHILL BY SPENDING YOUR DAY, YOUR WEEK, YOUR MONTH, OR EVEN YOUR YEAR WITH YOUR BEST *FRIENDS*—ON NETFLIX! HERE'S HOW. **By Marc Snetiker**

WHAT IT'S ABOUT

ORIGINALLY TITLED *FRIENDS LIKE US,* NBC's must-see Thursday-night staple followed six twentysomethings navigating love and life in New York City. It sounds simple and it was: *Friends* almost never relied on overly cerebral plots, instead finding the humor in character idiosyncrasies, inside jokes, the perils of dating, and the basic delights and indignities that come with close friendship. For 10 seasons (from 1994 to 2004), David Crane and Marta Kauffman's comedy dominated the pop culture landscape—then went on to become one of TV's most fondly remembered (and frequently rerun) sitcoms. With all 236 episodes now on Netflix, could there *be* any better binge?

KEY PLAYERS

Ten years, six pals, and oh-so-many connections



ROSS GELLER
(DAVID SCHWIMMER)
PALEONTOLOGIST

Neurotic and highly rational, Ross is generally irritable and insists on always being right. His three divorces (from lesbian Carol, jilted Emily, and drunken Rachel) would perhaps suggest otherwise.

RACHEL GREEN
(JENNIFER ANISTON)
WAITRESS/
FASHION BUYER

From spoiled runaway bride to career-driven single mom, Rachel's growth through the series is peppered by an up-and-down relationship with Ross and insistence that she's not a pushover (she definitely is).

TOP 10 GUEST STARS RANKED

Famous faces were as ubiquitous as Fat Monica jokes

BRAD PITT
"The One With the Rumor" (Season 8)
Aniston's then husband starred in a Thanksgiving ep, playing a very different role: a founding member of the "I Hate Rachel" club.

REESE WITHERSPOON
"The One With Rachel's Sister" (Season 6)
The actress was utterly perfect as Rachel's even-more-spoiled little sister Jill, who shook up her sib when she briefly dated Ross.

PAUL RUDD
Seasons 9–10
Phoebe's best chance at normalcy was marrying geeky pianophile Mike, who became a beloved member of the group during 18 episodes.

CHRISTINA APPLEGATE
"The One With Rachel's Other Sister" (Season 9)
Rachel's other sister was the despicably witless Amy, who didn't know her niece's name yet still wanted custody if her parents died.

SUSAN SARANDON
"The One With Joey's New Brain" (Season 7)
Sarandon played a soap diva (think Susan Lucci) who struck up a romance with Joey after he let it slip her character would be killed.

MARCEL, CAST, SCHWIMMER: NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES (3); ANISTON: WARNER BROS. TELEVISION/GETTY IMAGES; PITT, WITHERSPOON, RUDD, SARANDON: NBC/GETTY IMAGES (4); APPLEGATE: DANNY FELD/NBCU PHOTO BANK

Central Perk's *iconic orange couch found its way to New York last year at a pop-up shop for* Friends' *20th anniversary. In one month, 60,000 rears made an imprint.*

JOEY TRIBBIANI
(MATT LeBLANC)
ACTOR

Though he's not an out-and-out dunce, simpleminded Joey offers his own wisdom when it comes to sex, dating, and food. He's constantly hungry for all three.

MONICA GELLER
(COURTENEY COX)
CHEF

The most maternal of the group, Monica is also the most controlling, competitive, and obsessively clean—and she'd be the first to tell you. She's a classic neat freak, but hey, she can be breezy, too.

CHANDLER BING
(MATTHEW PERRY)
TRANSPONSTER?

Chandler's "thing" is being funny, as evidenced by his biting sarcasm and nonstop wisecracks. He often laments his awful childhood and the fact that no one knows what his occupation actually is.

PHOEBE BUFFAY
(LISA KUDROW)
MASSEUSE

Not to be confused with her twin sister Ursula, Central Perk's occasional coffeehouse performer is kooky and spiritual, often exposing her friends to her eccentric or naive beliefs.

New Year's kiss

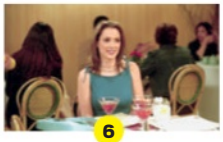
Is her marriage backup

Started catering business with

To test a relationship

EW'S TAKE

TV critic Ken Tucker praised the new sitcom with a solid A– grade, calling it "the best-cast show of the season" and adding that it "operates like a first-rate Broadway farce, complete with slamming doors, twisty plots, and intricately strung together jokes." But the initial review also shows just how much the series evolved over its first few seasons. For instance: We surmised that Monica was the straight woman and primary character "because Courteney Cox is the biggest name-brand star." We called Matthew Perry "the most complex lummox on television," and in regard to David Schwimmer, Tucker wrote, "It took me two weeks to figure out that he was Monica's brother and not her lover." Though, to be fair, the siblings did indulge in a few head-scratchingly intimate hugs that first season.



6

WINONA RYDER
"The One With Rachel's Big Kiss" (Season 7)
Nobody believed that Rachel had actually kissed her former sorority sister, played with hilarious closeted enthusiasm by Ryder.

7

BRUCE WILLIS
"The One Where Paul's the Man" (Season 6)
The action star won an Emmy—and got to hook up with Aniston—playing the intimidating father of Ross' student girlfriend.

8

TOM SELLECK
Seasons 2, 3, and 6
Magnum P.I. himself romanced Monica as Dr. Richard Burke, a friend of Monica's father and Chandler's biggest competition.

9

JULIA ROBERTS
"The One After the Super Bowl: Part 2" (Season 2)
Roberts got sweet revenge as Susie, who stole Chandler's clothes, stranding him in the restroom.

10

GEORGE CLOONEY AND NOAH WYLE
"The One With Two Parts" (Season 1)
The *ER* hunks appeared as—this is a stretch—cute doctors who went out with Monica and Rachel.

CENTRAL PERK: DAN STEINBERG/INVISION/AP IMAGES; LEBLANC: DAVE BJERKE/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; COX, PERRY, KUDROW: NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES (3); RYDER, WILLIS, SELLECK, ROBERTS: NBC/GETTY IMAGES (4); CLOONEY AND WYLE: FOTOS INTERNATIONAL/GETTY IMAGES

BINGE!

Friends

SEASON GUIDE	SEASON SUMMARY	MUST-WATCH EPISODE	SKIPPABLE EPISODE	THE ONE WITH THANKSGIVING
1	Runaway bride Rachel moves in with Monica, who helps her transition into the real world. Ross' affection for Rachel is (mostly) unrequited.	**"The One With the Ick Factor"** Monica's accidental date with a teen and Rachel's steamy dreams solidify the show's giddy handling of sex.	**"The One With the Boobies"** Remember Joey's parents? Neither do we. And Phoebe's dating life is at its worst with boyfriend Roger (Fisher Stevens).	**"The One Where Underdog Gets Away"** An Underdog float flies off during the parade, and Monica's dinner burns after everyone runs to the roof to watch and gets locked out.
2	Rachel tries to win Ross back from his new girlfriend; Joey lands a role on *Days of Our Lives*; Monica dates her father's friend Dr. Richard Burke.	**"The One With the Prom Video"** A long-lost tape reveals Ross' decades of devotion to Rachel; they decide to be a couple.	**"The One With Five Steaks and an Eggplant"** We hate seeing the Friends argue, like when they feud over their incomes here.	**"The One With the List"** Ross and Rachel break up right after getting together, thanks to his list of her pros and cons. It's the least Thanksgiving-y episode of the series.
3	Rachel and Ross feud after his one-night stand (they were on a break!); Monica dates a millionaire (Jon Favreau); Chandler and Joey adopt a chick and a duck.	**"The One Where No One's Ready"** Everyone delays getting dressed for an event at Ross' museum. One of the series' all-time best episodes.	**"The One With the Screamer"** Ben Stiller guest-stars as Rachel's aggressive boyfriend, yelling his way into a truly grating 22 minutes.	**"The One With the Football"** The gang gets competitive during a game of touch football where emotions run high and sibling rivalry runs even higher.
4	Phoebe carries triplets for her half brother (Giovanni Ribisi); Ross marries Emily (Helen Baxendale); Monica and Chandler have sex.	**"The One With the Embryos"** A game-changer quiz competition, in which Monica and Rachel lose the apartment to Joey and Chandler (Chanandler?).	**"The One With the Invitation"** Lazily regurgitated Ross-and-Rachel clips play as Ross debates whether to invite Rachel to his wedding.	**"The One With Chandler in a Box"** Chandler spends the day in a shipping crate as punishment for kissing Joey's girlfriend.
5	Monica and Chandler try to keep their budding romance secret; Ross' marriage to Emily dissolves; Ross then drunkenly marries Rachel.	**"The One Where Everyone Finds Out"** Arguably one of the funniest eps ever, thanks to Chandler and Phoebe's escalating romantic fake-outs.	**"The One With the Yeti"** Emily's demand that Ross not see Rachel comes to a head, and an aimless plot about Phoebe's mom's fur coat leaves us, well, cold.	**"The One With All the Thanksgivings"** Everyone flashes back to their worst Thanksgiving (see: Phoebe's past life in 1862 and Monica accidentally slicing off Chandler's toe).
6	Rachel moves in with Joey and Phoebe moves in with Monica and Chandler, who get engaged; Joey lands a role on a low-rent TV show, *Mac and C.H.E.E.S.E.*	**"The One With Unagi"** Three plotlines—Chandler and Monica's homemade gifts, Ross' ka-ra-*tay*, and Joey's search for a twin—make for the season's best.	**"The One That Could Have Been"** An ambitious what-if two-parter (Corporate Phoebe! Married Rachel!) that, despite a few laughs, is largely forgettable.	**"The One Where Ross Got High"** The show's best 30 seconds find Ross and Monica confessing each other's sins to their judgmental parents at lightning speed.
7	Monica prepares for her wedding to Chandler; Rachel dates her assistant Tag (Eddie Cahill); Phoebe discovers Rachel's positive pregnancy test in the trash.	**"The One With All the Cheesecakes"** A rare Rachel-Chandler team-up in which the two become addicted to treats mistakenly delivered to Chandler.	**"The One With the Vows"** Monica and Chandler attempt to write their vows, but the gang's flashbacks to the early days of their relationship are old news.	**"The One Where Chandler Doesn't Like Dogs"** Chandler reveals he doesn't like dogs after Phoebe sneaks one in to dinner; Ross grows obsessed with a game about naming all 50 states.
8	Rachel is pregnant with Ross' baby; Joey develops feelings for Rachel that culminate in a proposal; Chandler and Monica reveal baby dreams of their own.	**"The One With the Videotape"** A recording of the night Ross and Rachel slept together reveals who came on to whom—and everyone's seduction style.	**"The One Where Joey Tells Rachel"** Best to pretend the Joey-loves-Rachel story line never happened, and this episode is the most criminal.	**"The One With the Rumor"** Brad Pitt stirs up trouble as a former friend of Monica's who reveals that he started the "I Hate Rachel" club in high school...with Ross.
9	Monica and Chandler struggle to conceive; Phoebe begins dating Mike; Joey wholeheartedly pursues a real relationship with Rachel.	**"The One With Rachel's Phone Number"** Joey suspects Monica is having an affair and embarks on a comedy of errors to prove it.	**"The One With the Sharks"** Two words: shark porn.	**"The One With Rachel's Other Sister"** Rachel's sis Amy shows up and starts a fight after finding out she won't be Emma's guardian. She also thinks Emma is Phoebe, so there's that.
10	Joey and Rachel call their almost-relationship quits; Phoebe marries Mike; Monica and Chandler adopt; Rachel accepts a job in Paris.	**"The One Where Ross Is Fine"** Schwimmer is in fine form as Ross pretends to be okay with Rachel and Joey's relationship (which, frankly, nobody's okay with).	**"The One After Joey and Rachel Kiss"** The premiere took fans' clamor into consideration with this clunker that sets up the end of the dating experiment.	**"The One With the Late Thanksgiving"** Monica decides not to host Thanksgiving but is persuaded otherwise...until everyone shows up an hour late and she locks them out in a huff.

CAST: REISIG & TAYLOR/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES

Spoiler alert from 1994: *Central Perk barista Gunther (James Michael Tyler) was not a natural blond. "I had to bleach my hair every week for 10 years," Tyler tells EW. "That was one of my least favorite things to do."*

*FRIEND*LY BANTER

IN DEFENSE OF JANICE

With her nasal voice and grating "Oh my Gawd"s, Chandler's ex-girlfriend **Janice** → was the on-again, off-again lover everyone (especially Chandler) despised. But recurring star Maggie Wheeler knows that, deep down, you actually have a soft spot for her. "The writers created this fabulously weird character that you love to hate," Wheeler tells EW. "This crazy girl who is not particularly self-aware still gets to be at the party. She may not know what people are saying about her behind her back, but she comes from a very loving place. Somebody who loves life and love, and her laughter will always keep her going. My inclination is to say that Janice needs no defending!" Wheeler points out that, in some ways, Janice Litman Goralnik had the most normal life of all of the Friends. "She's got the baby, she's married, divorced, remarried, nice house," Wheeler says. "The only thing she didn't get was Chandler."

BEFORE THEY WERE STARS

Look hard and you'll spot some of your favorite actors in very early roles

MAE WHITMAN
(PARENTHOOD)
"The One Where Rachel Quits" (Season 3)
Role: Sarah Tuttle, a young scout whom Ross accidentally knocks down a flight of stairs

ELLEN POMPEO
(GREY'S ANATOMY)
"The One Where the Stripper Cries" (Season 10)
Role: Missy, an off-limits conquest who came between Ross and Chandler in college

CRAIG ROBINSON
(THE OFFICE)
"The One With Princess Consuela" (Season 10)
Role: The clerk who gave Phoebe free rein to legally change her name (Princess Consuela Banana Hammock!)

DAKOTA FANNING
(THE RUNAWAYS)
"The One With Princess Consuela" (Season 10)
Role: Mackenzie, a little girl who bonded with Joey when Monica and Chandler bought the house she lived in

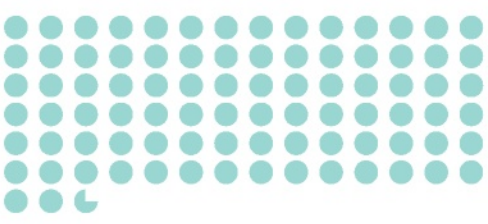
JIM RASH
(COMMUNITY)
"The Last One: Part 2" (Season 10)
Role: Nervous Male Passenger on Rachel's flight to Paris

BETH GRANT
(THE MINDY PROJECT)
"The One With the Thumb" (Season 1)
Role: Lizzy, a homeless woman who befriends Phoebe

TOTAL RUN TIME

● = *1 hour*

5,205 minutes (3 days, 14 hours, 45 minutes)



TYLER: NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK/GETTY IMAGES; SCHWIMMER, CAST: REISIG & TAYLOR/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES (2); KUDROW, LEBLANC, COX, ANISTON: NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES (4); PERRY: DAVE BJERKE/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; WHEELER: ALICE S. HALL/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; FANNING: NBC/GETTY IMAGES

THE

Astonishing Astounding Amazing Alarming

Acrobatic

Audacious

Awesome

(but teeny-tiny)

Adventures of

Ant-Man

LIVING LARGE ON THE SUCCESS OF *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY*, MARVEL GETS MICROSCOPIC WITH ITS MIGHTIEST, MINI-EST SUPERHERO YET. BUT CAN STAR **PAUL RUDD** AND THE STUDIO TURN THIS LITTLE GUY INTO THE NEXT BIG THING? BY **CLARK COLLIS** PHOTOGRAPHS BY **MICHAEL MULLER**

M

MICHAEL DOUGLAS HAS A QUESTION. "WHO," HE ASKS, "DO I HAVE to f--- to get out of this room?" It's day 25 of the shoot for Marvel's new superhero movie *Ant-Man* at Pinewood Atlanta Studios. Paul Rudd stars as former jailbird Scott Lang, who can shrink to microscopic size thanks to a special suit, as well as communicate with his namesake insects courtesy of his helmet. Douglas plays inventor Hank Pym, creator of the aforementioned outerwear, and Evangeline Lilly is Pym's daughter, Hope Van Dyne. Today this trio are shooting a scene in Pym's basement control room in which they hatch a plan to steal an even more advanced "Yellowjacket" suit from the villainous Darren Cross (*The Strain*'s Corey Stoll).

The sequence is filled with the kind of exposition-heavy dialogue ("Cross has the place loaded with transmission blockers!") that starts to sound like gibberish upon repetition. The problem? There is a *lot* of repetition as director Peyton Reed (*The Break-Up*) requests take after take, either to resolve technical glitches, to alter dialogue, or because an actor flubs a line. (At one point, Douglas refers to "Howard Stern," the father of shock radio, when he's meant to say "Howard Stark," the father of Iron Man Tony.)

EXCLUSIVE
First Look

(Right, from top) Paul Rudd; Evangeline Lilly; Michael Douglas and Rudd

By the time Douglas raises his F-bomb query, even if he's (kind of) kidding, it's fair to say he's speaking for everyone on set.

Of course, it's a minor miracle there even is a set. British filmmaker Edgar Wright (*Shaun of the Dead*) spent years developing *Ant-Man* for the screen, but last May, two months before production was scheduled to begin, he suddenly split and took an instant vow of media silence. (In a vague joint statement with Marvel, he blamed "differences in their visions of the film.") His exit prompted a nerve-fraying search for a new director and a flurry of questions: What really happened? Would the film still make its July 2015 release date? Without Wright, would the stars bail? And then there's the biggest question of all: Why the hell would anyone make a movie about Ant-Man anyway?

"They said, 'We're interested in you for a role in *Ant-Man*,' and I actually laughed."

—EVANGELINE LILLY

ANT-MAN, LITTLE-KNOWN AND just plain little, has an image problem that even his new director acknowledges. "When you're in a movie theater and

(PREVIOUS SPREAD) ANT: © MARVEL 2015; ANT-MAN: MICHAEL MULLER; (THIS SPREAD) ANT-MAN: MICHAEL MULLER; ANT: © MARVEL 2015; *ANT-MAN*: ZADE ROSENTHAL (3)

you see a poster for a movie called *Ant-Man*, it's like, 'Well, how is *that* cool?'" Reed says. Lilly, fresh off her run as an elf in the *Hobbit* movies, had never heard of the character when Marvel first approached her. "They said, 'We're interested in you for a role in *Ant-Man*,'" she says. "And I actually laughed."

But the tiny superhero casts a sizable shadow over Marvel mythology (see sidebar, opposite page). Hank Pym, the original Ant-Man, made his comic-book debut in January 1962 in *Tales to Astonish* #27. The following year, he founded the Avengers along with Iron Man, Thor, the Hulk, and Pym's future wife, Janet Van Dyne, who fought baddies under the moniker the Wasp. Over time, Pym adopted multiple alter egos, including the outsize Giant-Man. To complicate matters further, in 1979 the comics introduced Ant-Man No. 2, ex-con Scott Lang. That Lang guy is who Rudd is playing in the movie. "He's not used to being a hero," Reed says. "He's more like George Clooney in *Ocean's Eleven*. He's a guy trying to create a new life for himself and find redemption."

The history of this film is almost as serpentine as the history of the character. Way back in 2001, Wright and fellow Brit Joe Cornish (*Attack the Block*) wrote an *Ant-Man* treatment in the spirit of Elmore Leonard that revolved around Lang's criminal activities. In 2004, they successfully pitched it to Kevin Feige, who was then running production at Marvel Studios. (He's now president of the whole company.) At the time, Marvel was far from the movie powerhouse it is today. That began to change in 2006 when the studio announced an ambitious production slate—one that included *Iron Man*, *Thor*, and *Captain America*—and *Ant-Man* was pushed to the back burner for seven years. But Wright said he was grateful the development process took so long. "I'd rather do the film with 2015 effects than with 2005 effects," he told EW in August 2013.

A few months later, in December 2013, Marvel announced that Rudd, a longtime friend of Wright's, had been cast in the lead role. Just as Ant-Man might seem a strange candidate to become a big-screen superhero, the *Anchorman* and *Role Models* star seemed an odd choice to play one. But Feige insists Rudd was perfect for a hero with an unheroic history. "We wanted Scott Lang to have made mistakes that cost him dearly," he says. "But we wanted the audience to be rooting for him despite that. Paul Rudd can do almost *anything* and you're still charmed by him."

The movie, meanwhile, couldn't seem to catch a break. On May 23, 2014, Marvel and Wright broke the news that the director had left the project. Wright had reportedly jumped ship after Marvel presented him with a new script that had been rewritten without his input. "It is true that there were disagreements about the direction the script should take," Feige says now. But "everything was aboveboard. Everything was done with everybody else's knowledge. There was a sense of 'We're going in this direction, you're staying in this direction—maybe it's best that we end as friends.'"

The news of Wright's departure came as a huge blow to Rudd. "It all happened very quickly," says the actor, months later on the *Ant-Man* set. "I was devastated." Lilly assumed the movie was dead. "Then I found out, 'No—we're moving along,'" she says. One small problem: Lilly had not yet signed her contract, she says, which meant she could walk out too if she wished. No one wanted that, but she refused to put her Jane Hancock on the dotted line until she saw the new Marvel-revised script. The studio kept her waiting. "I got held off for months," she says. "Marvel knew [that first revised screenplay] wasn't good. They just knew it was in the direction they wanted."

Who You Callin' Yellow?

MEET ANT-MAN'S NEMESIS, SCIENTIST DARREN CROSS, A.K.A. YELLOWJACKET

(From top) Concept art for Yellowjacket in the film; in the comic; Corey Stoll

In the Marvel comics, *Ant-Man*'s Darren Cross was a businessman whose experimental pacemaker gave him superstrength. Yellowjacket was actually an alter ego invented by original Ant-Man Hank Pym during a period of mental derangement. But in the movie, it is Cross (*The Strain*'s Corey Stoll) who adopts the Yellowjacket persona. "[Cross] was this child prodigy that Hank Pym nurtured," says Stoll, who was a hardcore comic-book geek growing up. "He started to become aware of this fabled technology that can shrink people to half an inch. Now he's discovered his own version of that technology—which has a psychotic effect on people if they use it too much."

A Tiny 53-Year History

SINCE HIS ARRIVAL IN 1962, THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SUPERHERO HAS FACED DOWN ENORMOUS OBSTACLES

The original Ant-Man was a scientist named Hank Pym, who invented a reducing potion capable of shrinking people and also an enlarging serum capable of—well, you can probably work that one out for yourself.

TALES TO ASTONISH
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
27 JAN.
10¢
LET ME TELL YOU, WHILE I STILL CAN, HOW IT HAPPENED... FOR I WAS...
"THE MAN IN THE ANT HILL!"
SAVE ME, SOMEBODY, SAVE ME!! DON'T LET THEM DRAG ME THERE! NOT ≡GASP≡ INTO THE ANT HILL!!

JAN. 1962

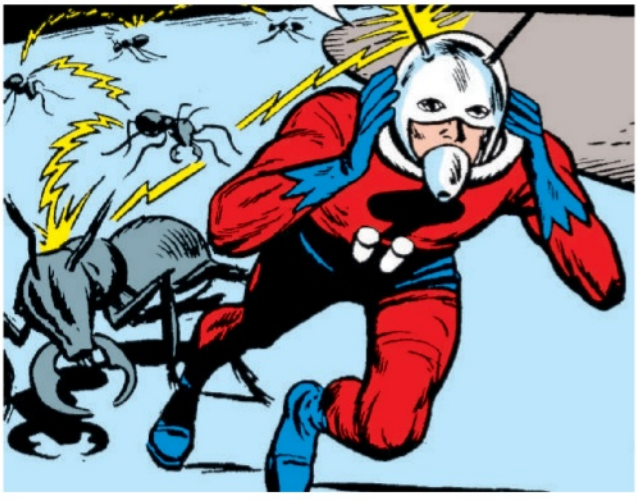
DEBUT

Hank Pym first appeared in the Stan Lee-written *Tales to Astonish* #27 with an adventure titled "The Man in the Ant Hill" (long story short: A shrunken Pym winds up in an anthill).

SEPT. 1962

FIRST COSTUME

Pym returned in *Tales to Astonish* #35 to make a protective costume, invent a helmet with which he could communicate with ants, and (because it was the '60s) fight Communist agents.



JUNE 1979

SCOTT LANG

The second Ant-Man, electronic engineer/ex-con Scott Lang, was introduced in *Avengers* #181. In the same year's *Marvel Premiere* #48, Pym bestowed Lang with his powers after Lang battled villain Darren Cross.

2006–07

THE IRREDEEMABLE ANT-MAN

In this series, a third Ant-Man, Eric O'Grady, used his powers for nefarious ends (e.g., watching a woman shower).

SEPT. 1963

THE AVENGERS

In *The Avengers* #1, Pym cofounded the titular Marvel superhero team with Iron Man, Thor, the Hulk, and Pym's love interest, the Wasp. In fact, the Avengers were actually his idea: "If we combined forces, we could be almost unbeatable!" In time, Pym would operate under multiple alter egos, including Goliath and Yellowjacket—his persona when he, as a mentally troubled superhero, infamously struck the Wasp in 1981's *Avengers* #213.

2010

THE AVENGERS: EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

The Pym version of Ant-Man was among the lead characters on this animated show, which premiered on the Disney XD cable network. The show was un-mightily canceled two years later.

(OPPOSITE PAGE) CONCEPT ART: © MARVEL 2014/DISNEY; COMIC BOOK: © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT; STOLL: GREGG DEGUIRE/WIREIMAGE.COM; ANT: © MARVEL 2015; (THIS PAGE) *TALES TO ASTONISH* #27, *TALES TO ASTONISH* #35, *THE AVENGERS* #1: © MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT (4); ANT: © MARVEL 2015

Meet the Cast

IN ANT-MAN'S UNIVERSE, THE HEROES AND THE VILLAINS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM

SCOTT LANG/ ANT-MAN

(PAUL RUDD)

A thief-turned-superhero, Lang is trained in the ways of shrinking and ant husbandry by Hank Pym.

"Scott's a good guy who's made some pretty bad choices," Rudd says. "Debatable—but not too debatable."

HANK PYM

(MICHAEL DOUGLAS)

Pym is a brilliant inventor, the original Ant-Man, and a troubled mentor to a troubled Lang.

"It's not just a mentor-pupil relationship," says director Reed. "It's screwed-up mentor and screwed-up pupil. They have to learn from each other."

HOPE VAN DYNE

(EVANGELINE LILLY)

Hope is the daughter of Pym and Janet Van Dyne (a.k.a. the Wasp).

"She is a kick-ass, strong, intelligent young woman," Lilly says. "She has her own role to play in the heroics of the film."

(FROM LEFT)

KURT

(DAVID DASTMALCHIAN)

LUIS

(MICHAEL PEÑA)

DAVE

(T.I.)

This trio of Lang-assisting ex-cons, whom he meets in prison, do not appear in the comics but play a big part in the film.

"We are the team that makes up the Ant-Man crusaders, if you will," explains rapper-actor T.I.

Rudd himself worked on the script with *Anchorman* director Adam McKay, who also briefly flirted with directing *Ant-Man*. (He ultimately passed.) The clock was ticking. If the film was still going to meet its July 17, 2015, release date, Marvel had to find a replacement, fast. The studio's collective blood pressure finally dropped after they met with Reed, who had devoured Marvel comics as a child and has known studio president Feige for more than a decade. Marvel then recruited rising screenwriting team Gabriel Ferrari and Andrew Barrer to rewrite (and rewrite) until everyone was satisfied.

Despite all that script drama, Rudd says he still sees the narrative blueprint Wright and Cornish created. "The bones of it is really Edgar and Joe," he says. "It's been an emotional roller coaster, but I'm very excited now."

THE 45-YEAR-OLD PAUL RUDD strolling around the set of *Ant-Man* is one trim-looking individual. You might say he looks appropriately small were it not for that impressive musculature, which his tight gray shirt does little to hide. "I've been working with trainers and cut stuff out of my diet: alcohol, fried foods, carbs," he says. I tell him he's just described what I had for lunch, and he laughs. "I just described what I had every f---ing day for most of my *life*," he says, and then adds: "Except it was just alcohol and carbs as a child."

That lean, mean physique isn't just for show. When we first meet Lang, he is in prison for stealing from the CEO of a company that was itself stealing from its employees. "There's a prison fight and you've got to buy Paul in that role," says Reed. Lang longs to go straight—he has a young daughter he wants to build a relationship with—but when he leaves the big house, he ends up nabbing Pym's Ant-Man suit. Was he set up? "There might be stuff going on that Scott doesn't know about that's a lot bigger than him," Reed says.

Having proven his light-fingered bona fides, Lang is trained by Pym, who plans to use him to thwart Darren Cross

RUDD: DESIREE NAVARRO/WIREIMAGE.COM; DOUGLAS: MICHAEL BUCKNER/GETTY IMAGES FOR *VARIETY*; LILLY: JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES FOR DISNEY; DASTMALCHIAN: JESSE GRANT/GETTY IMAGES; PEÑA: MICHAEL KOVAC/GETTY IMAGES; T.I.: J. COUNTESS/WIREIMAGE.COM

Director Peyton Reed and Rudd on set

(Stoll). Cross is a former protégé of Pym's who has developed his own version of the Ant-Man technology and created the alter ego Yellowjacket. Pym and Lang's attempt to steal the Yellowjacket suit is both assisted and complicated by Lilly's Hope Van Dyne. "She's not been in her father's life for a long time," Lilly says. "So her arc in the movie—as Scott's is with his daughter—is trying to find a relationship."

If this is all sounding a bit too "family drama" for a Marvel movie, don't stress. There's shrinking! Cool shrinking, Reed promises. "What we're doing is very different from *Honey, I Shrunk the Kids*," he says. "It's going to be much more experiential." Instead of having actors perform with outsize props, *Ant-Man* is utilizing both macro photography—the filming technique used on bug documentaries—and motion-capture technology. "There are cameras and lenses that make small areas look like the most epic landscapes," says co-producer Brad Winderbaum. "Then we're shooting motion capture with Paul to insert Ant-Man into those environments."

About that motion capture: Rudd was bummed by the lack of balls. "I thought, 'Oh, I'm going to get to wear one of those suits that has Ping-Pong balls on it,'" he says. "There are no Ping-Pong balls, just dots. The technology has advanced." He was pretty wowed when he saw the test scenes, however. "It was mind-blowing," he says. And surreal, adds Stoll—he also did time in the suit. "The director shouts out, 'And now you're gonna get punched on the left side of your face!' 'And now there's a swarm of ants!'" he says. "It was a lot of fun."

PEYTON REED

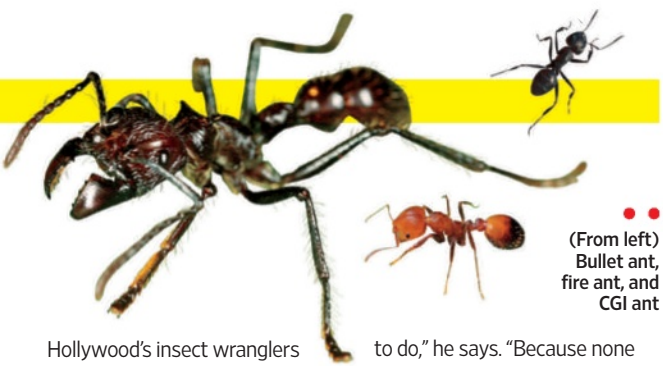
EDGAR WRIGHT

SPEAKING OF FUN, DOUGLAS WAS joking about that whole "Who do I have to f--- to get out of this room?" thing. The 70-year-old Oscar winner is also the father of two young children, Dylan and Carys, and being part of the Marvel universe has scored him major points at home. "My son is finally proud of me—I'm accomplishing something!" he says. And age has its benefits. After more than 50 years in the film business, he didn't sweat the director switch much. "There's something that's larger than any one individual in these things," he says, and then adds, punctuated by a fake cough, "although it would be hard to convince Robert Downey of that."

Always good for a laugh, that Mike Douglas, even under duress. Back on set, as he, Rudd, and Lilly prepare to once again tackle that interminable heist-prep scene, he decides to lighten his costars' mood with a little joke. "Do you know how you smell mothballs?" he asks. Nope. "Well, first you spread their little legs..." And if you do it *really* well, you get to leave the room when you're done. ■

Attack of the Killer Ants

THESE INDUSTRIOUS INSECTS PLAY A HUGE ROLE IN *ANT-MAN*



(From left) Bullet ant, fire ant, and CGI ant

Hollywood's insect wranglers must have been heartbroken. For *Ant-Man*, director Peyton Reed shot some real ants for reference purposes, but virtually all the six-legged suckers in the film are computer-generated. "It's impossible to get real ants to do anything you want them to do," he says. "Because none of us is Ant-Man!" The film's CGI creations include fire ants, winged carpenter ants, and the fearsome bullet ants. "Their bite is one of the most painful in the insect kingdom," Reed says. "The bullet ant would definitely rank as the most badass."

REED AND RUDD: ZADE ROSENTHAL; REED: JOE SCARNICI/GETTY IMAGES; WRIGHT: JASON MERRITT/GETTY IMAGES; BULLET ANT, FIRE ANT: GETTY IMAGES/PHOTO RESEARCHERS (2); CGI ANT: © MARVEL 2015

Girls Night

What do Lena Dunham, Allison Williams, Zosia Mamet, and Jemima Kirke talk about over dinner? The usual: work, friends, hobbies, the future. Which, for them, means awkward sex scenes, a new *Star Wars* star, *Peter Pan Live!*, and the far-reaching fourth season of their lightning-rod HBO series, *Girls*.

By Sara Vilkomerson Photographs by Peter Yang

Zosia Mamet, Jemima Kirke, Lena Dunham, and Allison Williams photographed on Dec. 16, 2014, at the Wythe Hotel in Brooklyn

Out

Lena's Selfies!

Dunham and Williams

When the stars of HBO's *Girls* get together, it feels less like a co-worker meeting than a camp reunion: warm hugs, exclamations over hairstyle changes, and breathless catch-ups on one another's lives. "When I hear the cast of *Friends* talk about missing each other every day and going on vacation together, I think: That will be us," says creator and star Lena Dunham, who joined costars Allison Williams, Jemima Kirke, and Zosia Mamet on a recent Tuesday for dinner in—where else—Brooklyn. ¶ These days, it's rare for all four ladies to be in the same room. *Girls'* fourth season premieres Jan. 11 with its heroines all over the place: Hannah (Dunham) is in Iowa for graduate school, Marnie (Williams) is still trying to launch her music career, Shoshanna (Mamet) is heading into the workforce, and Jessa (Kirke) is still at loose ends when it comes to where her life is meant to take her. ¶ With pasta and wine on the table, the conversation between the four women has the same wit, warmth, and raunch that have allowed the show to strike such a zeitgeistian chord. Buckle up for their thoughts on love scenes, nudity, friendship, and the secrets of *Star Wars*.

Warning: Explicit language follows!

All of you have been very busy with side projects during *Girls'* hiatus. Let's start with Allison's: Did you all watch *Peter Pan Live*?

[*Lena Dunham, Zosia Mamet, and Jemima Kirke all start to applaud.*]

Jemima Kirke I was away in Miami where I had no access to—

Allison Williams Television?

Kirke I watched the clips online, and I was bracing myself: Oh, God, is this going to be weird? But you were really, really good!

Williams Thank you. I want Rafa [Kirke's 4-year-old daughter] to watch it.

Kirke Oh, she'll watch it. I didn't know you had to do an English accent.

Williams How was it?

Kirke Perfect!

Lena Dunham It was better than Jemima's.

Kirke Better than mine.

Dunham I bought it on iTunes. Allison did this smart thing—she prepared everyone, like, "I know you hate-watched [*The Sound of Music*]." As a result you got ahead of it, and Twitter's cynicism was pretty silent.

Williams I was in such a bubble. I've never been so invested in something. For only three hours of my life, everything needed to go right. It was so f---ing complicated with the flying. I flew into Christopher Walken a week before.

Is musical theater something you want to keep doing?

Williams Of course, I'd love to. I'm doing an American Songbook concert at Lincoln Center in March.

Zosia Mamet Oh my God, that's so exciting! Why haven't you told me this?

Dunham I'm going to be there. On the show we have Marnie doing all this cringeworthy singing.

Williams I know. I'm nervous that people are going to be like, "Just stop f---ing singing!"

SELFIES: COURTESY OF LENA DUNHAM (2)

Mamet, Kirke, Williams, and Dunham

Dunham You are actually an amazing singer, and what you do on *Girls* is acting. Zosia also is a great singer.
Mamet I actually just found out that they're workshopping the musical of *American Psycho* for next fall, and I'm going to do it.
Williams What? Holy s---.
Dunham That is amazing. Are you the Chloë Sevigny part?
Mamet Reese Witherspoon.
Williams I cannot wait for this.
Kirke What's workshopping?
Mamet You do it for a month and rehearse like you're putting on a play. It's for investors to figure out how much the play is going to cost, figuring out the kinks.
Dunham This is a really big deal. And not to brag, but Jemima had two art shows this year, and you have not made a painting that hasn't sold out before it was finished.
Kirke That might have to do with being on the show.
Mamet/Dunham/Williams Who cares?
I'm assuming all of you read Lena's book, *Not That Kind of Girl*, which came out in September.
[*All nod.*]
Dunham They were all so supportive. They were all at my book party, I felt very lucky. Jemima did an event with me at BAM.
Kirke I got up on stage with f---ing Zadie Smith. God, she was so intimidating.
Dunham You were a star.
Speaking of stars, has Adam Driver told you anything at all about his role in next year's *Star Wars*?
Mamet/Williams/Dunham Nooooo.
Williams I've tried everything. I'm the biggest *Star Wars* fan! I feel like I'm a bigger fan than he is. Nothing! It's so frustrating. He won't even say if he's playing a good guy or a bad guy.
Kirke Obviously he is the villain. Come on, guys.
Dunham He has a beautiful but evil face. [*Laughs*] He won't tell us anything. He won't even tell us what country he's in.
Williams I asked him if he was real or CGI.
Dunham I asked him if his costume was heavy, and he was like, "I can't tell you that." They transfer him back and forth—
Mamet In a trash bag, right?
Dunham Basically. It's a parka that looks like a trash bag.
Kirke What's the name of the director again?
Mamet/Williams/Dunham J.J. Abrams.
Kirke Why do they do that?
Dunham Because everyone cares so much. A high premium is placed on secrecy in Hollywood.
Williams I would take pictures. [*Laughs*] I would take paparazzi pictures at this point.

This fourth season begins with all of your characters in very different places emotionally and—in the case of Hannah—physically. Lena, was there an overarching theme you wanted to convey this season?
Dunham Something I thought about a lot was how when you're in your 20s, there's a feeling of "When I decide to be an adult, this will all work out." People start making good choices: They get a job, they figure out how to graduate, they get sober. But just making the good choice isn't enough to save you. I remember I was living with my parents when I realized that even if I wash the dishes and don't steal alcohol from my mother and don't ignore my friends when they call me for a week and a half, life is *still* really hard.

(From top) Scenes from the new season: Adam Driver, Mamet, Kirke, and Andrew Rannells; Ebon Moss-Bachrach and Williams

DRIVER, MAMET, KIRKE, RANNELLS: CRAIG BLANKENHORN/HBO; MOSS-BACHRACH AND WILLIAMS: MARK SCHAFER/HBO

"I did try to quit first season. I remember being on my porch and smoking a million cigarettes and saying, 'I can't.'"

Jemima Kirke

With four seasons under your belt, do you guys feel like you know your characters more intimately?

Mamet Yes and no. Part of me knows [Shoshanna] intrinsically because we've got this amazing platform to play characters who are allowed to grow. I think I don't know her in the way she doesn't know herself yet.

Kirke I'm still trying to figure it out. When someone asks me who my character is, it's hard to answer. I don't really have a formula for who she is.

Dunham I always felt like Jessa was the Tracy Jordan of *Girls*. Like, you know how on *30 Rock* Tracy Morgan could say a really smart math theorem but then ask what a sandwich is?

Kirke You've actually given me this Tracy Morgan reference before. It helped.

Dunham We've always joked that Jessa's the person who would start speaking fluent Chinese but didn't know what Facebook or a text message was. This season we really start to figure out who Jessa is, and where her vulnerabilities come from.

Do you find it strange or amusing when people tell you they identify as a "Marnie" or a "Shoshanna"?

Williams That's a compliment. But it's also a simplification, and things change over time. If you stopped watching after season 1 you'd have a very different idea about what that statement means.

Dunham Something to note: Anyone who says they're a Jessa is not a Jessa. Jessa would never say it! So whenever someone comes up to me and is like, "She's the Hannah to my Jess," I'm like, "Okay, you're two Hannahs. Or you're probably a Marnie."

Williams I've found that most journalists relate to the Hannah part of it and are running from the Marnie-ness that kind of haunts them.

Dunham [Executive producer] Jenni Konner was like, "Am I a Marnie?" And I was like, "Sorry, you're a Ray." [*Laughs*] Judd Apatow once said Marnie is like Charlotte—"You know, the normal one." I love *Sex and the City* and those characters, but Charlotte was *not* normal. [*Turns to Kirke*] People tried to say that you were the Samantha.

Kirke I've had one sex scene. How could I be the Samantha?

Dunham She's got a big sex scene in episode 9. It's a very sexy scene, and the spoiler that I'll give you is that her sneakers are on. She's wearing Keds and a bra, and she's naked besides that. Someone said it was weird to watch because it was sexy.

Kirke [*Points to Dunham*] She wouldn't watch it! [The director] said, "They're squirming in their seats. It's so lame." Why couldn't you watch it?

Dunham Because it made me nervous!

Kirke But I have to watch you having sex all the f---ing time!

Dunham But I have s---ty, awkward sex. You don't watch me look genuinely aroused in the sack.

Williams The funniest thing to me is how much sex I have on the show and how little I wear that amount of sex as a person. People wash it off of me or something and are like, "Oh, you've never seen a penis in real life." And I have so many sex scenes!

Dunham You got your ass motorboated in the season premiere!

Williams Which I can't wait to see.... I had a couple of days talking to wardrobe and makeup to get ready to rig the thing that I wore for the ass motorboating. It was an engineering achievement! I would manufacture it if more than one person a year needed it. [*Laughs*] It was so elaborate—it involved Spanx that we cut away and glued down and involved menstrual pads and two of those weird thongs. I've had to do scenes like this twice now.

Kirke, Dunham, Williams, and Mamet

Mamet I've done it once. It's awkward.
Dunham I'll tell you an early funny sex-scene story. Zosia was allergic to the glue you apply to the nudity patch. So we had to create this thing that was a piece of a shoebox with a pad.
Mamet It really was elaborate.
All the nudity and sex scenes must be incredibly awkward to film in general.
Kirke [*To Dunham*] You won't show pubic hair. It's *very* weird. I don't see it as different. Nude is nude is nude.
Dunham I won't show my pubic hair. Rebel Wilson made a joke about this on the MTV Movie Awards, something like "I've seen Lena Dunham's vagina more than Ben Affleck's beard." I've never shown my vagina! That's my thin red line.

Williams Do you know why?
Dunham I think because for me boobs and butts feel comic, and vagina feels intimate and specific. If I was going to do it, I'd want to do it in a sexy French film or something.
Kirke Even just the front?
Dunham Yeah, we filmed it once and then I was like, "Can we cut that?" On a purely aesthetic level...there's a Margaret Cho bit about how she has a fat vagina and tried to do vagina crunches. I relate heavily.
Williams You've talked about this a lot.
Kirke You have great tits, so you're happy to show them.
Dunham I have nice boobs. My butt is fine. I have a fat vagina. [*Laughs*]

Kirke My husband loves a fat vagina. I don't have a fat vagina. But apparently it's like a muffin.
Dunham Do you remember that conversation when you were like, "I'd let you have sex with my husband." And I said, "But I don't want to."
Kirke Well, why wouldn't you want to? Now I'm offended.
Dunham He's gorgeous! But I want to have sex with my boyfriend.
Kirke You were single at the time. I was being charitable. I just wanted you to experience that joy.
There's a lot of guest stars this season, including Jason Ritter, Anthony Edwards, Gillian Jacobs, and Spike Jonze. Any chance of us seeing your pal Taylor Swift make an appearance?
Dunham That would be the greatest thing of all time. She's a little busy taking over the world right now. I once read this thing online that was like, "Lena doesn't think Taylor is a good enough actress." Taylor is an incredible actor, she's the most iconic performer of her generation, and she's also one of my best friends. If she wanted to come murder my character on the show, I'd let her. She can do anything she wants.
Do you have any endgame idea in mind for how long *Girls* will run?

Dunham I feel so lucky because I was warned over and over again that the first season will be fun, the second season everyone will start to give you s---, the third season will be a hell where no one is speaking to each other, and by fourth season everyone will be quitting.
Kirke I did try to quit first season. I remember being on my porch and smoking a million cigarettes and saying, "I can't."
Dunham She tried to quit. It was a momentary panic. You were like, "Lena, I have to quit!" And I said, "Really?" And then you were like, "I'll think about it." And then we never discussed it again. [*Laughs*]
So is there a chance this show could turn into *Women* and be about all of you in your 30s and 40s?
Dunham When I first started, James L. Brooks said to me, "When there is a TV show that's going well, there is literally no better job in the world." I had this attitude at the start like, I want to be like British TV and know when it's time to stop and leave people wanting more. Now I'm like, I love these characters. I love watching them grow. We have so much freedom. And I'll never have a better job.
Williams It's a pleasure and a privilege. Also, I feel like the film business is in such a weird growing pain.... I'm fine being like, you guys figure that out and we'll keep doing this dream job.
Mamet We're essentially doing what they used to do in the heyday. We're making a very long movie every year.
Dunham I don't think I've told you guys this. I used to have this idea that after *Girls* my adult life would start. And my adult life is happening! Our adult lives are happening, and we're doing this together. It's beautiful. ■

SINCE HER KNOCKOUT PERFORMANCE IN *THE HELP* FOUR YEARS AGO, **Jessica Chastain** HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST STARTLING ACTRESSES OF HER GENERATION. HER BRASH TURN IN **A Most Violent Year** COULD EARN HER A THIRD OSCAR NOD. BUT DON'T BE FOOLED BY HER QUIET POISE. SHE'S TOUGHER THAN SHE LOOKS. | *BY JOE McGOVERN*

The Fighter

ON THE SURFACE, SHE IS HOLLYWOOD'S PORCELAIN ideal of smart beauty. Elegant. Refined. Serene. But if you'd met Jessica Chastain 15 years ago, she might have verbally roughed you up. "When I was 22, I was easily baited for a fight," she says. "And I got into a lot of them, big ones. I was very confrontational. When I would feel the tension of an argument starting up, I could never stay quiet. I could never walk away."

That tough, tempestuous scrapper flickers in her latest film, the 1981-set crime drama *A Most Violent Year*. As Anna, the Brooklyn-wise wife and more-than-equal business partner of a heating-oil entrepreneur (Oscar Isaac), Chastain is a viper coiled to strike. Anna is a gangster's daughter who

learned to cook the books along with her ABCs, and she knows one thing to be true: No matter the battle, she wins.

Chastain, 37, might do just that at this year's Oscars: She's expected to score her third nomination in four years. In 2011 she appeared—out of nowhere—in a blazing Roman-candle burst of six films, including Best Picture nominees *The Tree of Life* and *The Help*, and was nominated for her performance in the latter as a blond, bedazzled social outcast in 1963 Mississippi. The next year she earned another nod for the fact-based *Zero Dark Thirty*, in which she starred as Maya, the CIA sleuth behind the Osama bin Laden manhunt. It's a role that still flares within her. Last month on Twitter she denounced speculation that a much-criticized female expert in the Senate's CIA torture report is Maya. "I know for a fact that it's not," she says now. "Take my word for it or don't, but I know her personally, and I know the woman in the report is not her. For a fact."

Friendships with undercover CIA agents didn't seem in the cards for Chastain early on. Growing up in a blue-collar household outside Sacramento, her enthusiasm for Spielberg and Shakespeare didn't translate to the classroom. By her senior year she'd stopped going to high school, and ultimately she dropped out. "I was a terrible student," she says. "Eventually I got my adult diploma, but I did not graduate. And I thought that I wasn't an intelligent person because I did so poorly. But I think about that now. There are kids out there that aren't doing well in school—and I hope they never think it means they're stupid. It's all about finding where your interest lies."

For her, it was in the theater. After performing in several Bay Area productions, including the lead in *Romeo and Juliet*, she auditioned for New York's prestigious Juilliard School. And at 22—that pivot-point age—she was accepted. "I'd never been around literature like that," she says. "It completely opened me up." For the last two years of her education, she was given a full scholarship by alum Robin Williams. She wrote the actor thank-you notes, but they never met. "He changed my life so much," she says. "He changed so many people's lives so much, but he was very shy about taking credit for it."

Shortly after Chastain's graduation, a family tragedy—the 2003 suicide of her younger sister Juliet—calmed her turbulence. "The focus of my life changed," she says. "I didn't care about being the best; I just wanted all the people in my life to know how important they were. And to know that I am here because they are here." Afterward, her professional rise was slow and not always steady. For eight long years she appeared in middling or low-profile roles before finally breaking through. "Achieving success in your 30s is considered late in her business," says *A Most Violent Year* director J.C. Chandor. "It's given Jess a great sense of careful, mature

A Most Prolific Year

In 2014, Jessica Chastain starred in four films, including (clockwise from top left) *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby* (with James McAvoy), *A Most Violent Year* (with Oscar Isaac and Albert Brooks), and *Interstellar*

(PREVIOUS SPREAD) PETER HAPAK/TRUNK ARCHIVE; (THIS PAGE) *THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELEANOR RIGBY*, *A MOST VIOLENT YEAR*: ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA (2); *INTERSTELLAR*: MELINDA SUE GORDON; (OPPOSITE PAGE) *THE HELP*: DALE ROBINETTE; *THE TREE OF LIFE*: MERIE WALLACE; *THE DEBT*: LAURIE SPARHAM; *ZERO DARK THIRTY*: JONATHAN OLLEY; *THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELEANOR RIGBY*: THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY; *INTERSTELLAR*: MELINDA SUE GORDON; *A MOST VIOLENT YEAR*: ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA

Warrior Women

AS VARIED AS HER ROLES ARE—A SOUTHERN TROPHY WIFE, A CIA ANALYST, A PUNK-ROCK GUARDIAN—MOST OF CHASTAIN'S CHARACTERS HAVE AN INNER FIRE AND ARE DOWN FOR A FIGHT. | *BY JOE McGOVERN*

1 THE HELP 2011
Chastain went blond and bosomy to play Celia Foote, the bighearted ditz with a devastating secret who refuses to be ignored by the town's elite. She studied Marilyn Monroe's wounded-girl voice, lending an edge of sympathy—limned with slyness—to the role.

2 THE TREE OF LIFE 2011
"Unless you love," says her character, "your life will flash by." Preparing to play a grieving mother, she sat for hours in front of a portrait of the Madonna at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art.

3 THE DEBT 2011
Chastain took German-language classes, learned Israeli martial arts, and read about Nazi experiments on children to prepare for this drama about 1960s Mossad agents encircling a Mengele-like doctor.

4 ZERO DARK THIRTY 2012
"Maya is a computer," she says of her CIA analyst, who led the successful mission to find Osama bin Laden. "She's all brain. I had monologues that go by so quickly because the text is so dense, but it was such an opportunity to study and research and learn."

5 MAMA 2013
For this smart, spooky horrorfest, Chastain sported punk-rock eyeliner, tattoos, and a black wig to play a guardian to two feral girls. In a rare coup for an actress, she starred in the two top box office earners in a single week: *Mama* and *Zero Dark Thirty*.

6 THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ELEANOR RIGBY 2014
"I've known Ned Benson for 10 years, and he wrote the character for me," Chastain says of the director of this delicate study of loss, costarring James McAvoy. "Someone that I know that well writing a part for me—it focused me on things I needed to explore."

7 INTERSTELLAR 2014
"Every film I do is a course in something," she says. For this operatic sci-fi, in which she played Matthew McConaughey's long-abandoned daughter, she registered in quantum entanglement and theoretical astrophysics. "I even understand the Tesseract," she says with a laugh.

8 A MOST VIOLENT YEAR 2014
"I love how the character is set up," she says. "The first time we see her she's putting makeup on. She's very comfortable in this environment. She's what you would expect from the femme fatale in a 1930s gangster movie."

ambition. She never misses when she gets up to bat."

And she gets up to bat a lot. Chastain appeared in four movies in the fall of 2014, each chosen for its director: *Interstellar*, to work with Christopher Nolan; *Miss Julie*, with European icon Liv Ullmann; and *The Disappearance of Eleanor Rigby*, for her good friend Ned Benson. She has a propensity for auteurs—Michael Haneke (*Amour*) and Xavier Dolan (*Mommy*) are two of her favorites, and Dolan wooed her into his next film via mongoose-hugging photos on Twitter—and for movies that get people debating. "It may sound strange to say, but I love getting into these obsessive conversations with people about *Zero Dark Thirty*, about *Tree of Life*, about *Interstellar*," she says. "These are three of my movies that some people are passionately for and some people are passionately against, but I absolutely love the conversations that they've started."

Chandor credits her with effectively co-writing the role of Anna in *A Most Violent Year* after he showed her a draft of the script in 2013. "She started comparing Anna to Dick Cheney," he says. "And I thought, 'Oh, I'm gonna to love doing this with her.'" Chastain says that the key to Anna was locating her energy. "This is going to sound hippie-dippy," she says, laughing, "but it's in her fingernails. I wanted them to be super-long, so that you'd see her as feminine and helpless. She can't lift a box correctly, she types on the calculator with a pencil. But the nails are actually her claws. You underestimate her, and she'll kill you." That instinct—fighting for your place and getting your scratch on—is something you gain only from living. It's born of doors closing, doors opening, personal loss, and professional gain. They don't teach that at Juilliard. ■

Movies

AN APPRECIATION

Gremlins 2 Turns 25

On the anniversary of Joe Dante's chaotic, creature-packed critique of corporate culture, it's time to declare this crazy sequel a gonzo comedy classic.

By Keith Staskiewicz

It's not easy staying this cute.

SEQUELS ARE USUALLY like gremlins: They multiply quickly and then turn out to be worse versions of the original. But Joe Dante's *Gremlins 2: The New Batch*—which richly deserves another look on the occasion of its 25th anniversary this year—resembles those little green nasties in a different way. It's chaotic, crude, no-holds-barred, self-destructive, hyperactive, hypoattentive, and insanely fun, with a special emphasis on *insane*.

Dante's 1984 *Gremlins* was a Christmas present with a black bow on top, a playfully gruesome horror-comedy about an infestation of malevolent mischief-makers running riot on the suburban town of Kingston Falls. They spring from the back of the cuddlier and endlessly merchandisable Gizmo, a small furry Mogwai who teams up with stars Zach Galligan and Phoebe Cates to exterminate the creatures. The film, which straddled the fence between family-friendly and fright-

GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH: PHOTOFEST; GIZMO: EVERETT COLLECTION

ening to the point that it—along with *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*—helped necessitate the creation of the PG-13 rating, was a relatively self-contained bit of oddball imagination. Narratively, there wasn't any need for a sequel, which is probably one of the reasons Dante decided to take the franchise in an entirely different direction.

He cites his intentions right up front: *Gremlins 2* begins with a one-off sequence featuring Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck from legendary animator Chuck Jones, and indeed the rest of the movie is probably the closest thing Hollywood has produced to a live-action Looney Tunes film. (And keep in mind, this includes Dante's actual live-action Looney Tunes flick, 2003's *Looney Tunes: Back in Action*.) The sequel moves its characters to New York, setting all the action in the massive Clamp building, a vertical monument to vertical integration that serves as both a surface parody of Donald Trump-style urban imperialism and a totem for all the ills and weirdnesses of modern living. Clamp Enterprises is part headquarters, television studio, genetic laboratory, and mall—such a catchall opportunity for parody that its parent company may as well be the Acme Corporation.

IT FEELS LIKE EVERY IDEA FROM DANTE'S TWISTED TOY-BOX IMAGINATION CRAWLED ITS WAY ONTO THE SCREEN: A BAT GREMLIN, A SEXPOT GREMLIN, A GREMLIN OF PURE ELECTRICITY.

The first 20 or so minutes go slow, establishing the company's absurdist corporate logic and seemingly infinite floor plan. The strokes are broad, but there's an art to caricature just like anything else, and Dante knows which features to exaggerate. However, once the gremlins are loosed, the pace becomes breakneck and frenzied, as if some green-clawed finger were holding down the fast-forward button. It feels like every idea from Dante's twisted toy-box imagination crawled its way onto the screen: a bat gremlin, a spider gremlin, a gremlin of pure electricity, a vegetable gremlin, a sexpot gremlin, etc., etc., and definitely etc. The most hilariously enduring of the bunch is the one voiced by Tony Randall, who downs an experimental brain hormone and becomes a George Plimpton-toned intellectual—a Mr. Hyde turned into a smug Dr. Jekyll.

Gremlins are a relatively recent addition to the folkloric bestiary, first conjured up in 1941 by pilots in the Royal Air Force to explain otherwise inexplicable aviation failures. The concept of tiny beings snipping wires and dismantling engines gained traction during WWII—a mythical stand-in for mechanical-age fears of entrusting our lives to machines we don't entirely understand. One of the earliest depictions of a gremlin is in the 1943 Bugs Bunny short *Falling Hare*, in which Bugs does battle against one of these spritely saboteurs. Disney also intended to make an animated film about the creatures based on a story by Roald Dahl, but it fell through. Gremlins, with their anarchic amoralism, were more in line with the Warner Bros. aesthetic anyway. Indeed, madcap creators like Dante and his progenitor Jones are themselves gremlins at heart, taking apart their medium piece by piece with deranged curiosity. Logic and order are enemies, and plot holes are just portals to something more interesting. When one character in *Gremlins 2* reiterates the old complaint that the rules make no sense because "it's always midnight somewhere," a gremlin jumps out of a control panel and sinks his teeth into his throat. And at one point—before the antics culminate in a gonzo Busby Berkeley showstopper rendition of "New York, New York"—the gremlins destroy the very celluloid of the film itself. Nothing is safe from their, and Dante's, gleeful abandon.

A Looney Lineage

Gremlins connects a host of movie critters, from Bugs Bunny to Ghoulies.

Looney Tunes 1930

Hellzapoppin' 1941

Piranha 1978

INFLUENCED

GREMLINS 1984

INFLUENCED

Ghoulies 1985

Critters 1986

Munchies 1987

CRITICAL MASS

For 10 current releases, we compare EW's grade with scores averaged from IMDb, Metacritic, and Rotten Tomatoes

	EW	IMDb	METACRITIC	ROTTEN TOMATOES	AVG.
MR. TURNER	A	70	95	97	87
TWO DAYS, ONE NIGHT ↗	A–	75	91	94	87
SELMA	A	66	91	100	86
A MOST VIOLENT YEAR	A–	74	84	92	83
WILD	A–	75	76	91	81
AMERICAN SNIPER	C+	78	73	76	76
INTO THE WOODS	B–	72	70	70	71
BIG EYES	B+	72	62	72	69
THE HOBBIT: THE BATTLE OF THE FIVE ARMIES	B	78	59	60	66
UNBROKEN	B–	72	59	49	60

LOONEY TUNES: WARNER BROS./PHOTOFEST; PIRANHA: PIRANHA PRODS./NEW WORLD/KOBAL COLLECTION; HELLZAPOPPIN': GREMLINS, CRITTERS, MUNCHIES: EVERETT COLLECTION (4); GHOULIES: PHOTOFEST

Best Movies, Worst Month

January is the bleakest movie month of the year. December scores all the Oscar flicks. Summer snares the superheroes. But despair not. EW sorted through 20 years of January movies for the best among the blech. Our picks, in order of awesomeness. —CAROLYN TODD

1

BEFORE SUNRISE
1995

It's been 20 years since Richard Linklater directed this charmed chance encounter between Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Celine (Julie Delpy) and launched modern cinema's most enduring love story. Unadorned by rom-com clichés, the pair's one-night romance is as alluring as it is honest. A I G

2

WAITING FOR GUFFMAN
1996

Christopher Guest's high-energy satire is mockumentary at its best, thanks to largely improvised performances by Guest's go-to stars, such as Fred Willard and Catherine O'Hara. And don't forget those Off Off Off Off Broadway numbers. A I G

3

56 UP
2013

A novel experiment in both sociology and documentary filmmaking, Michael Apted's *Up* series has visited the same 14 people (give or take) every seven years since 1964. The eighth installment finds the subjects well into middle age, and they have the wisdom and wrinkles to show for it. I G N

4

THE SON'S ROOM
2002

This Italian drama won the Cannes Palme d'Or for its heartrending portrayal of a family ravaged by their son's sudden death. Director Nanni Moretti elevates what could have been a sentimental sob story into a real meditation on the power of grief and the need for resolution. I N

5

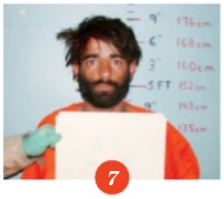
CLOVERFIELD
2008

The creature feature, produced by J.J. Abrams, combines the found-footage feel of *The Blair Witch Project* with the city-smashing terror of *Godzilla*. Filmed with handheld cameras, this thriller is a frenetic viewing experience. And we're still talking about that ending. A I G

6

4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS
2007

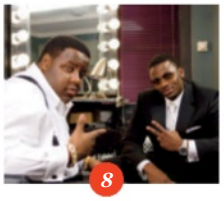
Set in late-'80s Communist Romania, this stark, harrowing drama about a young woman (Anamaria Marinca) seeking an illegal abortion is more sickening than most horror movies. The events that unfold are hard to stomach, but the raw performances make it worthwhile. A H I



7

TAXI TO THE DARK SIDE
2007

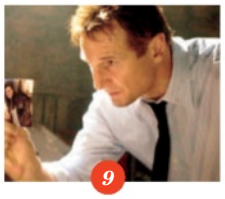
Centering on the killing of an Afghan cabbie at a U.S. air base, Alex Gibney's Oscar-winning doc takes an unflinching look at the disturbing reality of U.S.-levied torture in the war on terror. It's the kind of film that no Americans want to see, but can't forget once they do. D



8

NOTORIOUS
2009

This biopic isn't just a flashy account of rapper Notorious B.I.G.'s rise to East Coast hip-hop kinghood and his infamous murder. It's also the story of Christopher Wallace, the flawed, vulnerable man behind the larger-than-life persona, who grew up in the chaos of New York's crack epidemic. A I G



9

TAKEN
2009

Has it really been six years since Liam Neeson reinvented himself as a 21st-century action hero? Before seeing *Taken 3*, out Jan. 9, revisit this invigorating and fast-paced action thriller that makes a father's quest to find his kidnapped daughter just a little too fun to watch. A I G

10

CITY OF GOD
2003

You won't see this Rio watching the World Cup. Fernando Meirelles' Oscar-nominated drama, based on real events, exposes the bloody guts of a Brazilian slum brutalized by child-populated drug gangs: a cinema verité *Lord of the Flies*. Unforgiving and unforgettable. A I G N

Postholiday Slump

January, not April, is the cruelest month. A look back at the rare highs (and frequent lows) of Januarys past.

LIAM NEESON
reigns as the undisputed king of January, with the first Taken *movie in 2009,* The Grey *in 2012, and last year's squirrelly cartoon* **The Nut Job.** ↑

THE BEST BOX OFFICE
January on record was in 2010, thanks to December holdover **Avatar** ↑ *and the new release* The Book of Eli.

IF YOU LOVE
the illusion of blood spurting directly into your eyes, you're in luck. My Bloody Valentine 3D *and* **Texas Chainsaw 3D** ↑ *both slashed their way into theaters in the coldest month.*

IT'S A GOOD TIME
for rereleases of old movies: in 2012 the 3-D release of Disney's Beauty and the Beast, *and in 1997 the 20th-anniversary special edition of* **Star Wars.** ↑

THEY DON'T CALL
it a "dump month" for nothing. **Paul Blart: Mall Cop** ↑ *(2009) is the highest-grossing January U.S. release ever, at $146 million, but it was a critical belly flop.*

STILL, YOU'RE NEVER
left with nothing to watch. Countless Best Picture hopefuls, like this year's **Selma,** ↑ *get limited releases in December before a wide release in January.*

BEFORE SUNRISE: GABRIELA BRANDESTEIN; *WAITING FOR GUFFMAN*: SUZANNE TENNER; *56 UP*: ITV; *THE SON'S ROOM, THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE*: EVERETT COLLECTION (2); *CLOVERFIELD*: SAM EMERSON; *4 MONTHS, 3 WEEKS AND 2 DAYS*: ADI PĂDUREȚU; *NOTORIOUS*: PHIL CARUSO; *TAKEN*: STEPHANIE BRANCHU; *THE NUT JOB*: TOONBOX; *AVATAR*: WETA; *PAUL BLART: MALL COP*: RICHARD CARTWRIGHT; *SELMA*: ATSUSHI NISHIJIMA

KEY A = Amazon Instant Video G = Google Play H = Hulu I = iTunes N = Netflix streaming D = DVD only

Henriette Confurius, Florian Stetter, and Hannah Herzsprung in *Beloved Sisters*

Also Playing

Beloved Sisters

NR, 2 HRS., 50 MINS.

German filmmaker Dominik Graf speculates—*at length*—about the 18th-century love triangle between nerd-stud playwright Friedrich Schiller (Florian Stetter) and two gorgeous sisters (Hannah Herzsprung and Henriette Confurius). Graf has a knack for the zoom lens, which recalls Kubrick's ironic *Barry Lyndon*, but he walks so carefully through the minefield of melodrama that when an occasional blast of purple dialogue is triggered (such as "Save me from my passion!"), it only makes you wish for the unintellectual bodice ripper that the movie should have been. **C+** *—Joe McGovern* L

Free the Nipple

NR, 1 HR., 24 MINS.

Yes, breasts are a beautiful, natural, baby-nourishing thing, and they've been bizarrely shamed and oversexualized in American culture—but writer-director Lina Esco's amateurish debut is not the film to set them free. Her dramatized take on the real-life movement to challenge laws banning public female toplessness is basically just repeated scenes of pretty, strident twentysomethings spouting inane Revolution 101 rhetoric and shedding their bras for the cause. Sound titillating? It's not. **C–** *—Leah Greenblatt* L I V

Ethan Hawke in *Predestination*

MORE ON EW.COM *Taken 3* (in theaters Jan. 9) did not screen by our deadline, but you can find our review on EW.com

If You Don't, I Will

NR, 1 HR., 42 MINS.

The marriage of bourgeois French couple Pomme (Emmanuelle Devos) and Pierre (Mathieu Amalric) has devolved into a depressing series of petty arguments and unspoken resentments. He may or may not be having an affair with the local weather girl; she marks off her days with empty errands and nominally welcome drop-ins on her college-age son. When the pair fall into yet another round of peevish bickering on a day hike, Pomme pulls a Cheryl Strayed and decides to stay on her own in the woods. What follows isn't exactly a *Wild* adventure; director Sophie Fillières' film is too French, and too muted, for that. Instead, *If You Don't* is a quiet, intermittently poignant portrait of two people who've lost each other and aren't sure they want to find their way back. **B** *—Leah Greenblatt* L

Mathieu Amalric and Emmanuelle Devos in *If You Don't, I Will*

Predestination

R, 1 HR., 37 MINS.

Ethan Hawke first teamed up with Australian directing brothers Peter and Michael Spierig on 2010's *Daybreakers*, a cool-looking futuristic vampire caper that was full of the sort of potential that elevates expectations for the follow-up. Through that lens, their new project—featuring Hawke as a time-traveling cop—stumbles. The Spierigs' visual mastery is ironclad, and they've built an immersive, noirish alternate universe. But *Predestination*'s pace is too slack, and the brothers are so painfully tentative as storytellers that the easily guessed big twist gets three separate reveals. The scouting report on the directing duo remains "Wait until next time." **C+** *—Kyle Anderson* L

Television

Amanda Peet, Melanie Lynskey, Abby Ryder Fortson, Mark Duplass, and Steve Zissis on *Togetherness*

JAIMIE TRUEBLOOD/HBO

REVIEW ROUNDUP

A Show for Every City

It's all about location, location, location for HBO's slate of Sunday-night series. (And they're all the better for it.)

Girls *9 p.m.*
Togetherness *9:30 p.m.*
Looking *10 p.m.*

By Melissa Maerz

HBO MAKES great TV by creating a vivid sense of place. *Sex and the City* couldn't thrive without New York. *The Wire* wouldn't make sense without Baltimore. And if New Jersey didn't already exist, *The Sopranos* might've invented it. With masterful world-building and spot-on location scouting, these series revealed how their characters' dreams and disappointments are shaped by their environment. HBO's current Sunday-night lineup is no exception: *Girls* and *Looking* continue to explore how the young and the lost survive in New York and San Francisco, while the new series *Togetherness* looks at four professionals trying to make it in Hollywood. All three capture their cities' culture in a way that should impress locals and grant everyone else the right to judge, while secretly wishing they lived there too.

Girls is already one of the most "New York" shows on television, with its brilliant skewering of aspiring, overentitled creative-class types like Lena Dunham's Hannah. (Personal mantra: "You are from New York. Therefore you are just naturally interesting.") So it's fun to see season 4 relocate Hannah's tried-and-true Brooklynite self to the Iowa Writers' Workshop, where she discovers that she's just not that interesting in the Midwest. The second episode is not only a painfully accurate portrait of a typical creative-writing workshop but the perfect opportunity for Dunham to address her own critics, like when Hannah's peers complain that her work is just thinly veiled autobiography. When another student huffs that Hannah's sexy story is "about a really privileged girl letting someone abuse her," it sounds like a nod to the recent controversies over Dunham's book, *Not That Kind of Girl*. This season also has astute things to say about the heartbreak, and the relief, of getting older and reexamining your dreams, as Marnie (Allison Williams) makes a bid for pop stardom with Desi (Ebon Moss-Bachrach) and Shosh (Zosia Mamet) attempts to find a job that's not beneath her. That theme might hit home for anyone who has ever moved to New York with the wildest of ambitions—which is to say, nearly everyone who lives in the city now.

Looking's second season similarly finds its characters away from home, only to discover that, as Hannah's friend Elijah puts it on *Girls*, "wherever you are, there you go." Patrick (Jonathan Groff) and Agustín (Frankie J. Alvarez) road-trip from San Francisco to a country house owned by Lynn (Scott Bakula), who is now in an open relationship with Dom (Murray Bartlett). They're all trying to leave their usual lives behind for one fantastical weekend of partying, but real life has a way of creeping in. Even as Patrick continues his affair with videogame honcho Kevin (Russell Tovey), he misses Richie (Raúl Castillo), the sweet hairdresser he broke up with last season. Just like the city itself, he's caught between his affections for the tech guy and the artist, and he knows there isn't room for both. The central conflicts feel true to San Francisco: Dom is struggling to start a restaurant in the city's ultracompetitive foodie scene; Agustín wants a job at a shelter for gay and trans teens, even though the salary won't cover rent; and everyone's looking for love in a way that's so vulnerable, it feels authentic even if you've never been anywhere near the Castro.

Togetherness is set in L.A., but it shows a more everyday side of Hollywood, one that's populated by regular working people on the fringes of the entertainment industry. It was created by Mark and Jay Duplass, two filmmakers who know that world personally, having scraped by on DIY projects with microbudgets before bigger studios embraced them. Here, Mark stars as Brett, a sound designer who lives with his sexually bored wife, Michelle (Melanie Lynskey); their two kids; Michelle's party-rental-owner sister, Tina (Amanda Peet); and Brett's struggling-actor friend, Alex (Steve Zissis). It's a slower-paced, smaller-scale show about the sad reality of sticking it out in Hollywood into middle age. It also veers into weirder territory that would feel impossible outside California. But thanks to the chemistry between Peet and Zissis, it's endlessly engrossing. I binge-watched all eight episodes, only to feel disappointed that I'll have to wait to find out what happens to these likable oddballs. *Togetherness* is a charming surprise: It's set in the vicinity of Hollywood, but it doesn't *feel* "Hollywood." And that's what makes any TV setting real—the ability to seem like everywhere and nowhere, often at the same time.
Girls: **A–** *Looking:* **A–** *Togetherness:* **A–**

WITH MASTERFUL WORLD-BUILDING AND SPOT-ON LOCATION SCOUTING, THESE SERIES REVEAL HOW THEIR CHARACTERS' DREAMS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS ARE SHAPED BY THEIR ENVIRONMENT.

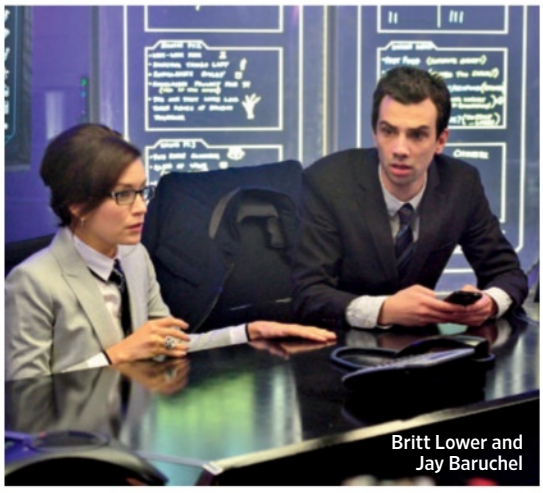
(Left) Lena Dunham on *Girls*; (below) Brian Gattas, Frankie J. Alvarez, Murray Bartlett, Lauren Weedman, and Jonathan Groff on *Looking*

GIRLS: MARK SCHAFER/HBO; *LOOKING*: RICHARD FOREMAN/HBO

BEHIND THE SCENES OF FXX'S NEW COMEDY

SCRIPT TEASE

No sitcom has dealt with the pressures of dating quite like ***Man Seeking Woman***, the new FXX series from former *Saturday Night Live* writer Simon Rich (debuting Jan. 14, 10:30 p.m.). Which is to say, things get surreal. Fast. "Instead of portraying dating naturalistically, we try to dramatize the way it feels," Rich explains. Meaning a blind date can be with a literal troll, or as in the case of the second episode, when our hero Josh (Jay Baruchel) needs to write the perfect text, it takes a *Dr. Strangelove*-style war room to get it just right. Rich gives us a peek at that intense scene with a script page he kindly agreed to annotate. —KEVIN P. SULLIVAN



Britt Lower and Jay Baruchel

1. Dating is a pretty low-stakes subject. But when you're single and lonely, it can feel like the most important thing in the whole world. In this episode, Josh asks a girl out on a date. It's a fairly insignificant event, but on our show it's depicted as the story of the century.

2. We hired an actual anchorman, Dan Duran, to play the anchorman. I think he drove in from his actual job, because he was wearing a suit. He nailed it! When we're using tropes, we try to do them wholeheartedly. Rather than have a comedian's take on an anchor, we wanted to get the real thing.

3. This shot proved a little bit impractical. We ended up doing a fun montage of people around the world tuning in and watching the broadcast from various far-flung locales.

4. A line like this, it's a line that everybody's probably said to their friends or their friends have said to them. It's all about trying to express how intense dating can feel, how high the highs can feel and how low the lows can feel.

5. The General is one of the advisers Josh rounds up to help him figure out how to send this text. Josh is sort of like the president in this scene. Only he has the authority to send that text.

6. Even though it's got sex aliens and time travel and robots and various monsters, at the end of the day, it's a pretty simple show. It's just about a guy trying to meet a girl. Every single page of the show is extremely autobiographical, whether it happened to me, or one of my writers, or somebody in the cast. That's where everything starts, us remembering our own lives and the mistakes we've made.

7. I can't wait for people to see that needle. It's metallic, which is important because it has a really mechanized feel. I wanted to sell, with this prop, that the General freaking out is something that happens from time to time. It's a really good needle.

INT. NEWS STUDIO - CONTINUOUS 1

An anchorman addresses the frightened nation.

2 ANCHORMAN (ON TV)
It's been almost twenty seconds since Josh texted Laura, and still no response.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE 3

Fifty thousand people watch the broadcast on the Jumbotron.

ANCHORMAN (ON TV)
By this point Laura must have seen the text. [Even if she was in the bathroom or something.] And yet the silence continues. What does it all mean? Was the text too forward? Not forward enough? Did she hate the text? There's just no way to know.

4

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Josh's advisors watch with mounting fear.

GENERAL 5
(fully drunk)
It's not right. None of this is right.

LIZ
Maybe she doesn't want to seem overeager?

MIKE
Maybe she's in the shower?

GENERAL
She's not in the goddamn shower! She hated the text! She's never going to respond! [We gotta pretend 6 we were kidding! Text JK!]

TWO SOLDIERS grab the general. He SMASHES his scotch bottle over one of their heads, knocking him unconscious. The other soldier STABS him in the neck with a HYPODERMIC NEEDLE. 7

GENERAL (CONT'D)
(passing out)
Text...J...K...

MICHAEL GIBSON/FXX

What Hath The WB Wrought?

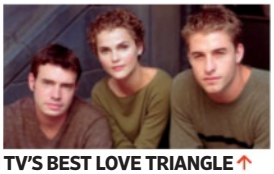
It launched in 1995, and while scrunchies and Beanie Babies are no longer in fashion, our nostalgia for The WB endures. On what would've been its 20th birthday, we toast the defunct network's highs and roast its lows. —C. MOLLY SMITH

BEST

DAWSON'S CRYING FACE ↑
Pure Internet gold from the Beek.

LORELAI AND RORY GILMORE →
Our favorite fast-talking, hyper-caffeinated, pop-culture-obsessed mother-daughter duo.

PARANORMAL POWER
Buffy and *Angel* had bite long before vamps were hot. (And let's not forget *Charmed* and *Supernatural*.)



TV'S BEST LOVE TRIANGLE ↑
Team Noel or Team Ben?

"NO TIGHTS, NO FLIGHTS"
Superman beat Batman to the origin-story punch with *Smallville*.

CHAD MICHAEL MURRAY
The stuff of 2000s teen fantasies.

THE WB + UPN = THE CW
Imagine a world without *Gossip Girl*. XOXNO!

MICHIGAN J. FROG →
Not too sad to see this one croak.

PEPSI'S *PLAY FOR A BILLION*
A chimp picked the winning number, and no one won the grand prize.

POPSTARS
It could have been the network's *American Idol*. It was not.

KIRK →
Kirk Cameron starred on a short-lived, eponymous sitcom. This is likely news to everyone but Kirk Cameron.

WORST

GILMORE GIRLS: FRANK OCKENFELS 3/THE WB; *FELICITY*: THE WB; CAMERON: DEREK STORM/FILMMAGIC.COM; GLAZER AND JACOBSON: LANE SAVAGE/COMEDY CENTRAL; ARC DE TRIOMPHE: LIGHTROCKET/GETTY IMAGES; BURESS: FREDERICK M. BROWN/GETTY IMAGES; MANDEL: MONICA SCHIPPER/GETTY IMAGES; PIZZA: LEW ROBERTSON/GETTY IMAGES

The *Broad City* Dictionary

New Yorkers have a long history of concocting slang (see: schmear, schlep, youse), and brassy twentysomethings Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson are no exception. Here, a guide to the BFFs' raunchy vocabulary just in time for the return of their Comedy Central series (premiering Jan. 14, 10:30 p.m.). —NINA TERRERO

Arc de Triomphe *Noun*

DEFINITION *A moderately acrobatic sexual position involving two women and two men. We'll leave the rest to your imagination...*

Brain Kegels *Noun*

DEFINITION *Exercises to keep you mentally nimble despite excessive pot consumption.*

EXAMPLE **Lincoln (Hannibal Buress)** "Your brain is a muscle, Ilana, and it does not get enough exercise. You need to do your brain Kegels."

Gross sex list *Noun*

DEFINITION *A catalog of questionable people with whom one would consider having relations.*

EXAMPLE **Ilana** "Do you know who's at the top of my mom's gross sex list? Howie Mandel."

Nature's pocket *Noun*

DEFINITION *One's vagina, specifically as it relates to storing weed undetected by law enforcement.*

Performance bib *Noun*

DEFINITION *An elaborate, embroidered collared bib worn for busking. Because of its exquisite craftsmanship, it's worth a lot of money (obviously).*

Pizza *Noun*

DEFINITION *A synonym for marijuana.*

EXAMPLE **Middle schooler** "Heard you're looking for some pizza?"

Abbi "Pizza?"

Middle schooler "Yeah, grandma. Pizza. Pot... Do you want pizza or not?"

Music

Meghan Trainor

*Title**

POP (EPIC)

By Melissa Maerz

MEGHAN TRAINOR ONCE told EW that being famous is like being in high school. If that's true, then let Taylor Swift and Katy Perry play the prom queens, because right now, no pop star is better than this 21-year-old singer, songwriter, and producer at playing the sassy best friend. Last year, Trainor made America feel awesome about the way their butts look in those jeans with her bubblegum smash "All About That Bass," and on her debut full-length, she's busy telling off that guy who's no good for you, or making a cheeky "Dear Future Husband" checklist that'll have Future Wives nodding their heads. (Rule No. 12: "After every fight, just apologize.") She's loudmouthed and funny, rhyming "flossing" with "Ryan Gosling," and she strikes just the right balance of raunchy and sweet on the ukulele-strummed title track, which finds her looking for a lover "who can get up on that bike/'Look, Ma, no hands!' " Her affection for blue-eyed soul, doo-wop, and oldies like Dion's "Runaround Sue" and Pat Ballard's "Mr. Sandman" will endear her equally to grandmas and the vintage-loving kids who borrow their cardigans, but she also has a knack for writing big, bold, sing-'em-out-loud-in-the-car anthems that sound contemporary, like the drunk-texting come-on "3am" and the morning-after shimmy "Walkashame." This is real-girl pop with massive charm. The only problem? It's quickly making her the one thing that could turn high school girls against her: popular. **A–**

BEST TRACKS

ALL ABOUT THAT BASS
A boomin' booty ode

DEAR FUTURE HUSBAND
A funny FAQ for the Mr. Trainor-to-be

TRAINOR: BROOKE NIPAR

*Yep, that's not a typo

Meet the Man Behind "Uptown Funk"

DJ-producer **Mark Ronson** talks about the making of his massive hit with Bruno Mars—and working with stars from Amy Winehouse to Michael Jackson. —MILES RAYMER

ON HELMING AMY WINEHOUSE'S SIGNATURE SONGS

"We made *Back to Black* in, like, two weeks. I wish I remembered more because it was such an amazing creative spurt, but so quick. She came with so many of those songs written that all I really had to do was arrange them. 'Back to Black' and 'Rehab' were the two that she wrote when we were together in New York—'Back to Black,' I played her the music and she wrote the song in, like, an hour. I wish I remembered more. And I wish, obviously, that we had made more music."

ON HIS NEVER-RELEASED TRACK FOR MICHAEL JACKSON'S POSTHUMOUS 2010 LP

"I was really excited about it—it was a good song. But more and more, as I got into it, I realized that there was something that wasn't connecting. I was too much of a Michael Jackson fan to keep working on it. I didn't know how to finish it, and I didn't think I was going to do the job that it deserved."

ON LANDING A MUSICAL ICON...AND TOTALLY FREAKING OUT

"Stevie Wonder played on the intro song 'Uptown's First Finale' [for Ronson's new album, *Uptown Special*]. I can't believe I have his harmonica on there. It's like being given the world's most beautiful diamond, and you keep being like, 'I have to set it better, what's around it? Maybe I need to put two little carats on the side, I don't know!' So I kept saying, 'Okay, I can do better.'"

ON THE ORIGINS OF "UPTOWN FUNK"

"I worked on Bruno's album [2012's multi-platinum *Unorthodox Jukebox*] and we had really good chemistry. I knew I wanted him on my record. There were a couple demos left over that I thought we would finish, but when we went over to his studio, he was like, 'Man, I want to do something else.' And he just got on this tiny cocktail drum kit and we're having this jam, it was pretty bare-bones. And then we started working on the first verse: 'That Michelle Pfeiffer/That white gold,' and we were like, 'This is *good*.'... There's no real chorus in 'Uptown Funk.' Kool & the Gang, James Brown, all those amazing funk songs—they're just a series of great hooks. So that was the MO when we were writing this song: 'No f---ing chorus, we're just staying cool.' [*Laughs*]"

RONSON: CAMERA PRESS/CARSTEN WINDHORST/REDUX

Mark Ronson

Uptown Special

POP (RCA)

By Kyle Anderson

MARK RONSON'S GRASP of weapons-grade *Soul Train* revivalism has no parallel. "Uptown Funk" breaks a serious sweat, but the centerpiece of Ronson's fourth album is the volcanic "Feel Right": Over heaving horns and bubbly bass, Mystikal spits surreal lines about bananas and bamboo and getting interplanetary with Bruno Mars. It's a master class in stanky, guttural rump shaking.

In fact, "Feel Right" pulses with such kinetic ferocity that it's almost a shame anyone else was invited to play. But Ronson, who is always operating with a DJ's mentality, knows that parties need breathers too. Those loungier interludes, several of which are led by Tame Impala frontman Kevin Parker, get so dreamy they sometimes threaten to turn Ronson's chilled-out moments into sleepy tab-closers, though several are saved by novelist Michael Chabon's vivid lyrical contributions. Still, the cumulative effect of *Special*'s contagious cool will keep hands up and bad vibes down—and if all else fails, just put "Feel Right" on repeat. **B+**

→ BEST TRACKS **Feel Right** • **I Can't Lose**

Shop Grrrls Janet Weiss, Corin Tucker, and Carrie Brownstein

RECORD SHOPPING WITH

Sleater-Kinney

When indie idols Sleater-Kinney first emerged from the noisy art-rock incubator of Olympia, Wash., in the early '90s, they struggled to tell their own story. "Coming up, it felt like there was just one lineage—angry," says singer-guitarist Carrie Brownstein. "Even though we didn't sound like the Runaways, people just assumed that's what we were." The trio would go on to define and ultimately transcend the riot-grrrl mantle over the course of seven incendiary albums before going on hiatus in 2006. Now, after nearly a decade of working on other projects—new bands, babies, a certain hit sketch-comedy show—they're back with *No Cities to Love* (out Jan. 20). Armed with our AmEx at Manhattan record store Other Music, Brownstein, singer-guitarist Corin Tucker, and drummer Janet Weiss dug through vinyl crates (and their personal histories) to find the punk icons, rap gods, and Me Decade cheese that have defined their hot rock.

—KYLE ANDERSON

▶ THE B-52'S, *WILD PLANET* (1980)

Carrie Brownstein "For me, the beginning of Sleater-Kinney was a nexus of the B-52's and Gang of Four. I loved [the B-52's'] Ricky Wilson's guitar playing. He wrote very catchy melodies, but they were bittersweet. He really told stories. There's a buoyancy to them. It's very surf-oriented, but I hear him everywhere now—people reference that sound."

▶ THE CLASH, *LONDON CALLING* (1979)

Janet Weiss "I was a huge Clash fan when I was in high school. Looking back on it, I realized that Topper Headon was this amazing drummer, and not just a basher. He made that band. *London Calling* is a masterpiece, in my opinion, and his drumming is just outrageously good. Too bad he was a huge junkie and broke the band up. If I'm not [a junkie] by now, I'm probably not going to be. I'm probably out of the woods on that. Maybe it's something I can do later in life. [*Laughs*]"

▶ TELEVISION, *MARQUEE MOON* (1977)

Corin Tucker "Olympia was a place where everybody was putting on music and being like, 'Have you heard this? What about this?' [Producer/musician] Calvin Johnson's house was all records, and we would have a dance party at Calvin's and go through his records."

▶ RUN THE JEWELS, *RUN THE JEWELS 2* (2014)

Brownstein "I actually downloaded this, but I really wanted the vinyl. Instead of having everything on my computer, I have a certain stack of records I'll rotate through, and it's really focused listening. So that one I've been playing over and over. It's not a record you can just sit back to. It's not a running-mix record. It's easily one of my favorites of the year."

▶ THE WHITE STRIPES, "LORD, SEND ME AN ANGEL" (2000)

Tucker "I just want to get all these Third Man Records seven-inches. I love Jack White. He's so good with the visual stuff—he's always got that together at the same time as the music. We toured with the White Stripes early on, and he was always strategizing. It's like Motown: They had everything down to the perfect letter of how you were presented, and that happened at the same time as the music. It's just that most of us are slobs and we don't get there until a little bit later."

▶ STEPHEN MALKMUS & THE JICKS, *WIG OUT AT JAGBAGS* (2014)

Weiss "I've played with Malkmus, and that's a much different mindset than Sleater-Kinney. He's this sort of mad genius in his own head, very cool and not emoting. In the end, the fit was a little weird. I want every show to be epic, and I think I pushed too hard in that band. I mean, he *invented* slacker. So as huge of a fan as I am of his, it was hard for me, because I play fast and I play loud, and he would just give me looks."

▶ KANYE WEST, *YEEZUS* (2013)

Brownstein "We wrote [*No Cities to Love*] over a long stretch of time, and when *Yeezus* came out, I remember just thinking about how exciting it sounded. There's a real heaviness on that record, a sense of something right on the edge of decay, sonically, that I really liked."

▶ BOSTON, *BOSTON* (1976)

Brownstein "Corin had this s---ty record player in her apartment, and I don't know why she even had a copy of this. She probably bought it at Goodwill or something. We would listen to it and we were like, 'What if we covered this song?' On the first Sleater-Kinney album, we cover 'More Than a Feeling,' which is one of the cheesiest songs. There's so many things wrong with it. In the cover version, we speed it up and tear it to shreds a little bit. We were commenting on it at the same time we were covering it. People always took Sleater-Kinney very seriously, but Corin and I always had a very humorous and self-aware approach to what we were doing. We obviously wanted to make music that meant something to us and meant something to other people, but there was always a sense of fun and freedom."

SLEATER-KINNEY PICKS

The B-52's
WILD PLANET

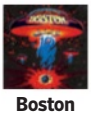
The Clash
LONDON CALLING

Television
MARQUEE MOON

Run the Jewels
RUN THE JEWELS 2

Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks
WIG OUT AT JAGBAGS

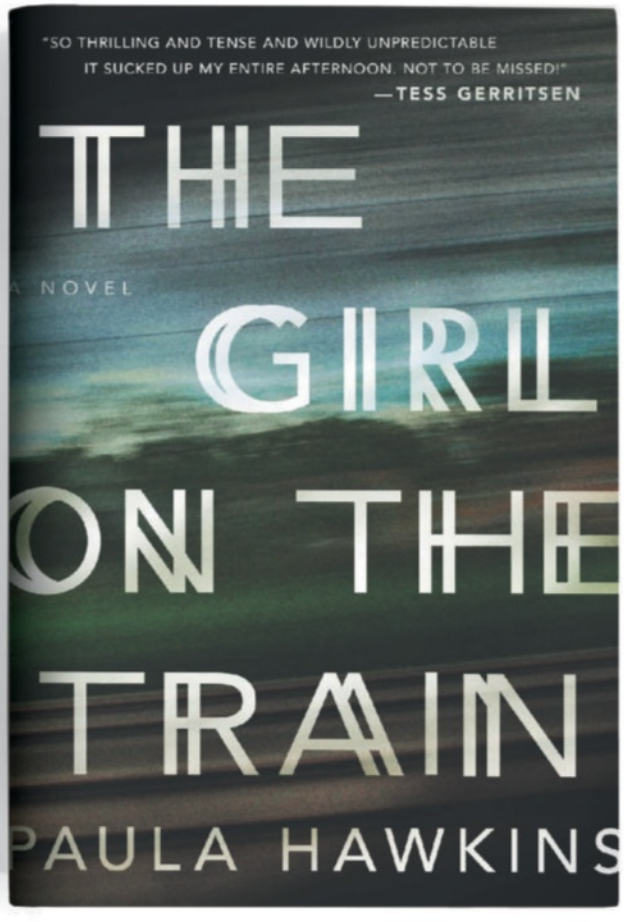
Kanye West
YEEZUS



Boston
BOSTON

SLEATER-KINNEY: BRIGITTE SIRE

Books



The Girl on The Train

Paula Hawkins

NOVEL

By Leah Greenblatt

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN isn't sexy and broken like the other bad girls of popular lit—the ones who are Dragon Tattooed or sociopathically Gone. She is, in fact, a wreck: Unemployed, overweight, painfully divorced, and prone to shotgunning sauvignon blanc for breakfast, Rachel Watson commutes every day to London from her sad suburban flat-share not because she has anywhere to be—she was let go from a PR firm months ago after one too many liquid lunches—but because she hates to admit that she doesn't. It's also a route that happens to bring her past the house she used to share with her ex-husband, now happily ensconced there with his new wife and baby. She can't help peering in as she passes daily (who could?), but it's the neighbors a few doors down whom she looks for more and more—a young couple whose pantomime of marital bliss captivates her from her window seat: "They're happy, I can tell.... They're what I've lost, they're everything I want to be."

Until one hot July morning, when things suddenly look less idyllic. Rachel sees the fine-boned blonde she calls Jess ("it fits her, pretty and carefree as she is") kissing a man on the back patio who is not her husband. Riveted and atypically sober, Rachel takes it in with all the fresh anger of her own betrayal and later, less soberly, decides to step off at her old station "just to see." She wakes up the next day bruised and brutally hungover with only a few dim memories of the night before. Within hours a local news brief with a familiar photograph appears: Jess has been reported missing. Except her real name isn't Jess, of course; it's Megan, and as the novel picks up Megan's own first-person thread, the gears of *Train*'s central mystery begin to churn.

THE OPENING LINES

"There is a pile of clothing on the side of the train tracks. Light-blue cloth—a shirt, perhaps—jumbled up with something dirty white. It's probably rubbish..."

Investing in narrators who aren't just unreliable but often hard to like isn't always easy. First-time novelist Paula Hawkins is playing a long game, though, and she pulls off a thriller's toughest trick: carefully assembling everything we think we know, until it reveals the one thing we didn't see coming. **A–**

25 TRAIN-SET MYSTERIES

PACKED STATIONS, LONELY TRACKS, STRANDED CARS: WRITERS LOVE SETTING MYSTERIES AND THRILLERS ON TRAINS. **BY ISABELLA BIEDENHARN**

KEY E = E-book C = CD A = Audible

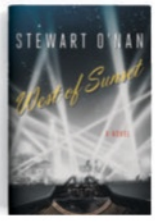
TITLE/YEAR	AUTHOR	DESCRIPTION	MOVIE OR TV ADAPTATION?	AVAILABLE ON
La Bête Humaine 1890	Émile Zola	The homicidal train conductor at the heart of Zola's gothic horror has an almost romantic relationship with his engine.		E C
The Story of the Lost Special 1898	Arthur Conan Doyle	In this short story a train goes missing, leaving behind only the engineer's dead body and a mysterious note.		E C A
The Mystery of the Blue Train 1928	Agatha Christie	This Hercule Poirot whodunit features an heiress strangled in a train compartment, a jewel theft, and an assortment of eclectic travelers.		E C A
Stamboul Train 1932	Graham Greene	Five train passengers' lives are intertwined in the sex- and crime-soaked story, which Greene deliberately wrote as a pleasure read.		C A
Murder on the Orient Express 1934	Agatha Christie	The highlight of Christie's book—about a murder committed on a snowbound luxury train—may be Poirot's quotable quip "I do not like your face, Mr. Ratchett."		E C A
Mr. Norris Changes Trains 1935	Christopher Isherwood	As the Nazis rise in Berlin, a man makes a strange new friend on a train. Mr. Norris is a spy, Communist, masochist...and much more.		E C A
The Wheel Spins 1936	Ethel Lina White	Another train, another mysterious new friend...and this one disappears. Alfred Hitchcock turned the novel into *The Lady Vanishes*.		E C A
The Case Is Closed 1937	Patricia Wentworth	In Wentworth's second Miss Silver mystery, a wife tries to free her husband from jail, helped by a madwoman and a vanished witness.		E A
Dread Journey 1945	Dorothy B. Hughes	Kitten is an actress trapped on a train in a game of cat and mouse. The twist? She's the mouse—and her director wants her dead.		E C A
Strangers on a Train 1950	Patricia Highsmith	In Highsmith's grim psychological thriller, the titular strangers discuss committing murders. Problems arise when one takes it seriously.		E A
4:50 From Paddington 1957	Agatha Christie	When Elspeth McGillicuddy witnesses a strangulation through the blinds of a passing train, only Miss Jane Marple believes her.		E C A
From Russia With Love 1957	Ian Fleming	Fleming's fifth James Bond novel sees the martini-sipping spy escaping assassination by the Soviet counterintelligence agency SMERSH.		E C A
The Taking of Pelham One Two Three 1973	John Godey	In every New Yorker's nightmare, a subway train is hijacked by a group of thugs, including a disgruntled former motorman and an ex-mafioso.		E C A
The Great Train Robbery 1975	Michael Crichton	The *Ocean's Eleven*-like page-turner follows a charming master thief as he embarks on a yearlong mission to steal a hefty shipment of gold.		E A
Midnight Specials 1977	Bill Pronzini	Pronzini's anthology binds together short railroad thrillers from writers like Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, and Edith Wharton.		
Le Transperceneige (Snowpiercer) 1982	Jacques Lob & Jean-Marc Rochette	In this French graphic novel, an ice age forces humanity onto a globe-circling 1,001-car train, until the poor caboose-dwellers revolt.		
"The Midnight Meat Train" Books of Blood, Vol. 1 1984	Clive Barker	A man falls asleep on an NYC subway train and awakens in a secret station past the end of the line, full of butchered human bodies.		E A
The Edge 1989	Dick Francis	On a train filled with rich Canadians and racehorses, a man tries to solve a real murder mystery while actors perform a theatrical one.		E A
Murder on the Ballarat Train 1991	Kerry Greenwood	Flapper-cum-detective Phryne Fisher finds her relaxing train trip thwarted by chloroform poisonings and rumors of black magic.		E C A
Death Train to Boston 1999	Dianne Day	Day's mystery contains odd ingredients: an exploding train, a pair of romantically involved detectives, and a sect of fanatical Mormons.		E C
Murder on the Trans-Siberian Express 2001	Stuart M. Kaminsky	Three stories—involving a stab-happy lunatic, a one-legged policeman, and a kidnapped rock star—intersect on a train.		E A
The Necropolis Railway 2002	Andrew Martin	An earnest young man's new railroad job is a dream come true—until he realizes his coffin-transporting predecessor has vanished.		E
Night Train to Lisbon 2004	Pascal Mercier	This philosophical work follows a routine-driven classics instructor who is inspired to make a change after studying the life of a brilliant doctor.		E C A
Murder on the Brighton Express 2008	Edward Marston	When a locomotive derails and leaves disaster in its wake, Inspector Colbeck must find the culprit before he strikes again.		E A
Lowboy 2009	John Wray	Told in short spurts, Wray's novel is set in the distorted mind of a paranoid-schizophrenic teen riding the subway.		E C A

West of Sunset

Stewart O'Nan

NOVEL

By Melissa Maerz



F. SCOTT FITZGERALD is one of those great American writers whose work is often eclipsed by his own legend. He's so well-known as a wild-partying alcoholic who squandered his wealth while his wife, Zelda, lived out her days in a mental hospital that critics often quote (and misquote) his most famous line—"there are no second acts in American lives"—as if it described his own final days, when the glow of *The Great Gatsby* was dimming and he was starting work on *The Last Tycoon*. There's a certain romance to the tortured-genius mythology, but Stewart O'Nan makes quick work of dispelling it in this beautifully written historical novel.

West of Sunset, which follows Fitzgerald's stint as a screenwriter during the 1930s, captures that era of Hollywood well, offering juicy scenes with Humphrey Bogart, Dorothy Parker, Ernest Hemingway, and other Fitzgerald friends and hangers-on, while lending witty dialogue to his affair with gossip columnist Sheilah Graham, a doomed romance that's worthy of a classic film. (A typical scene: Wondering if they're really a couple, Sheilah asks, "Are you with me?" and Scott replies, "I'm not against you," before pulling her body against his.) But it's the workaday quality of Fitzgerald's late years that makes O'Nan's novel so intriguing. In the end, this Jazz Age icon was reduced to not tragedy but mediocrity, driving a run-down car and doctoring scripts he didn't get credit for. While that ordinariness can weigh down the novel's pacing, it also makes Fitzgerald more human. Maybe there wasn't a dramatic second act to his life. But thanks to O'Nan, there are now some lovely final chapters. **B+**

O'NAN: BETH NAVARRO

THE OPENING LINE

"That spring he holed up in the Smokies, in a tired resort hotel by the asylum so he could be closer to her."

QUICK TAKES

All the Bright Places

Jennifer Niven

YA NOVEL

Some books make you laugh. Others make you cry. And sometimes—as is the case with Niven's sparkling YA debut, *All the Bright Places*—a book manages to get so under your skin that you end up throwing it across the room in frustration when it doesn't reach the conclusion you wanted. But regardless of how it ends, this heartbreaking love story about two funny, fragile, and wildly damaged high school kids named Violet and Finch (who meet cute atop a bell tower while each is contemplating suicide) is worth reading. Niven is a skillful storyteller who never patronizes her characters—or her audience. Now about that last chapter... **B+** *—Sara Vilkomerson*

Publishing

Gail Godwin

MEMOIR

Godwin's 45-year career-spanning memoir does, as its title suggests, explore the writer's shifting place in the publishing industry's disheartening transformation—from a place where tweedy editors spent years nurturing gifted young writers to a marketing machine where authors must now come with ready-made personal brands. But far more captivating than the business turmoil is the intimacy with which Godwin affectionately divulges the various moments, places, and characters in her life that eventually slipped into her 14 novels. These disclosures leave you hungry to reread her oeuvre with the newfound secrets in mind. **B+** *—Isabella Biedenharn*

Outline

Rachel Cusk

NOVEL

Cusk reveals almost nothing about her narrator, a novelist who's spending a week in Athens teaching a writing course. But gradually, through conversations with various figures—a Greek bachelor who takes her sailing, contemplative fellow writers, her eager students—glimpses of her story emerge: She's divorced, for instance, with two children. There's no traditional plot, simply this portrait of the novelist that takes shape entirely during these brief exchanges. Cusk's restrained, almost experimental prose is really not so much a novel as a meditation on identity, illusion, and the erasure of self that can occur during a marriage. **A–** *—Isabella Biedenharn*

Food Porn

Whether you're a home chef or a foodie who salivates over sumptuous pages of photographed meals, there's a cookbook for you this season. —ISABELLA BIEDENHARN

Eat
Nigel Slater
This "little book of fast food" is full of quick meals that don't skimp on flavor, from butterflied chicken to shrimp linguine. With his sweet, pithy phrases—such as "the scrunch of hazelnuts"—Slater will make a poet of your inner chef, too.

Chefs' Easy Weeknight Dinners
Edited by Dana Cowin
Even the very best chefs have to come home from work and feed themselves. Food & Wine compiles speedy and scrumptious recipes from more than 20 top chefs across the country.

Plenty More
Yotam Ottolenghi
If your New Year's resolution involves eating more vegetables, Ottolenghi's book and its savory photographs will have you cleaning out your local farmers' market in no time.

Twelve Recipes
Cal Peternell
Many consider chefs culinary artists, but Peternell, of Berkeley's Chez Panisse, actually has a degree in painting. Art runs in the family: His wife and sons added whimsical illustrations to this already beautiful book.

New German Cooking
Jeremy & Jessica Nolen
The husband-and-wife team from Philadelphia's Brauhaus Schmitz puts a fresh spin on traditional German recipes (hence the titular "new"). We can practically smell the meat and schnitzel from here.

Baking Chez Moi
Dorie Greenspan
Greenspan bakes her love of French pastries into this delectable dessert collection and tops it with personal anecdotes. It's the perfect book for the Francophile with a sweet tooth.

Saveur: The New Classics Cookbook
The Editors of Saveur
Feel like you missed Food 101? *Saveur*'s hefty tome comes with illustrated step-by-step guides on topics from braiding challah to using chopsticks.

Bar Tartine
Nicolaus Balla & Cortney Burns
San Francisco's Mission District keeps getting more delicious. Case in point: the locally sourced eatery Bar Tartine. These recipes may be complex, but your guests' satisfied smiles will be worth the effort.

Photograph by **MICHAEL CHINI**

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"★★★★"

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THE WASHINGTON POST • THE BOSTON GLOBE
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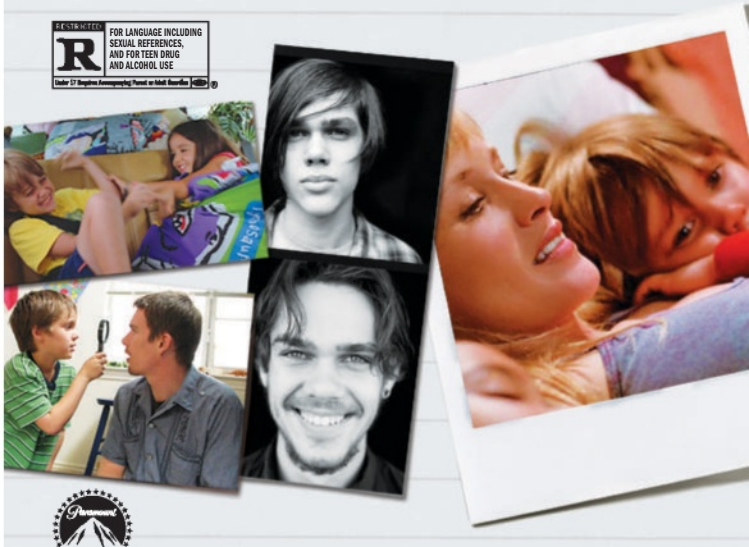

Paramount

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Great for a double play...

Not so great for Disaster Relief

When disaster strikes, compassionate people want to help. While donations of clothing, food, bottled water or toys may feel more personal than a monetary donation, the truth is that even a small financial contribution can do more good for more people, with greater speed and sensitivity. Cash donations provide medical and other life-saving services now, and rebuild infrastructure later. Even little donations can generate big, lasting impacts for good.

Giving wisely is good sportsmanship.

Check out the guidelines at USAID CIDI online: www.cidi.org.

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CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL DISASTER INFORMATION

WEEK OF JAN. 12–JAN. 18

The Cheat Sheet

YOUR DAY-TO-DAY GUIDE TO EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW IN POP CULTURE. BY RAY RAHMAN

MONDAY 1/12

Fashion Police: The 2015 Golden Globe Awards

TV | 9–10PM | *E!*

Kathy Griffin takes over Joan Rivers' beat as E!'s top red-carpet cop this season on *Law & Order: YSL*.

Friends to Lovers?

TV | 10–11PM | *BRAVO*

SERIES DEBUT Bravo's new show asks the question that has powered so many sitcoms over the years: What would happen if you dated your best friend? The answer is BAD THINGS, at least on *Friends to Lovers?*. Too many of the cast members are insufferable to the point of undateable, making you wonder how they're even friends at all. But there are some bright spots, including a seemingly mismatched videogame designer and publicist who share some genuinely sweet moments together. Root for them, forget the rest. **B–**

Eye Candy

TV | 10–11PM | *MTV*

SERIES DEBUT MTV's latest foray into scripted programming is a timely but utterly ludicrous thriller about a serial killer picking his prey from a dating app called...Flirtual (sigh). Former Nickelodeon star Victoria Justice stars as a hacker (bigger sigh) named Lindy, who decides to try to trap the killer but ends up being stalked herself. While Justice is a winning actress, she's miscast here and not helped by a story line that feels like one of those old USA TV movies that would have starred Shannen Doherty and Rob Estes and been titled, well, probably *Eye Candy*. **C–** *—Tim Stack*

TUESDAY 1/13

Parks and Recreation

TV | 8–9PM | *NBC*

SEASON PREMIERE We know at least one Pawnee resident will die this season. Eek! To stir the pot, our own *Parks and Rec* guru Dan Snierson guesses how our favorite characters might meet their demise.

Leslie Overdoses on waffles, falls and impales herself on open three-ring binder

Andy Suffocates after getting his head trapped in honeypot

Ron Crushed in cabin collapse during a phenomenon described as "a bacon-ado"

April Death by ennui

Tom Poisoned while testing new line of alcoholic wipes that can both sanitize your hands and get you drunk

Jerry Severe fart palpitations

Ben Literally crunched to death by numbers

Donna Mid-coitus

Wrestling With Death

TV | 10–11PM | *WGN AMERICA*

SERIES DEBUT A Bergmanesque exploration of the existential uncertainty that plagues...nah, just kidding, it's about morticians who moonlight as professional wrestlers.

Constellations

STAGE | *BROADWAY*

A play about a beekeeper (Jake Gyllenhaal) and a theoretical physicist (Ruth Wilson), who'll hopefully answer life's big question: Why is my bottle of honey always so sticky? I haven't even opened it yet.

Kroll Show

TV | 10:30–11PM | *COMEDY CENTRAL*

SEASON PREMIERE Nick Kroll's absurd sketch show enters its final season with the chameleon's usual cast of freaks: unintelligible PR mavens Liz and Liz, Bobby Bottleservice, and über-Canadian teen dream Bryan LaCroix. But there are also brand-new weirdos, like the smart-ass Detective Logan, a character on a fictional cop show called *Dead Girl Town*. Kroll's an incredible small-screen Sybil, and you'd be nuts not to tune in for his last hurrah. **A–** *—Molly Simms*

Gone Girl

DVD | *MOVIE*

The David Fincher film's Blu-ray release comes with a collectible 36-page Amazing Amy book for children. Or at least children of people trying to raise a murderous sociopath.

Near Enemy

BOOK | *ADAM STERNBERGH*

Sternbergh follows 2014's *Shovel Ready* with another adaptation-friendly sci-fi noir. Buy it now before it gets one of those embarrassing "Now a Major Motion Picture" seals.

Panda Bear

ALBUM | *PANDA BEAR MEETS THE GRIM REAPER*

This is the album your cool niece will buy with that iTunes gift card you gave her over the holidays.

Meghan Trainor

ALBUM | *TITLE*

The Massachusetts-raised singer's debut proves she isn't *only* "All About That Bass." Some of the album's other standout tracks include:

- **"All About That Sand Eel, Which, Like Bass, Are Native to Cape Cod Bay"**
- **"All About That YANKEES SUCK!!!"**
- **"All About That Wicked Lobstah Roll"**

PARKS AND RECREATION: BEN COHEN/NBC; CONSTELLATIONS: JOAN MARCUS; TRAINOR: DANIEL DESLOVER/ZUMAPRESS.COM

*Times are Eastern Standard and subject to change

WEEK OF JAN. 12–JAN. 18

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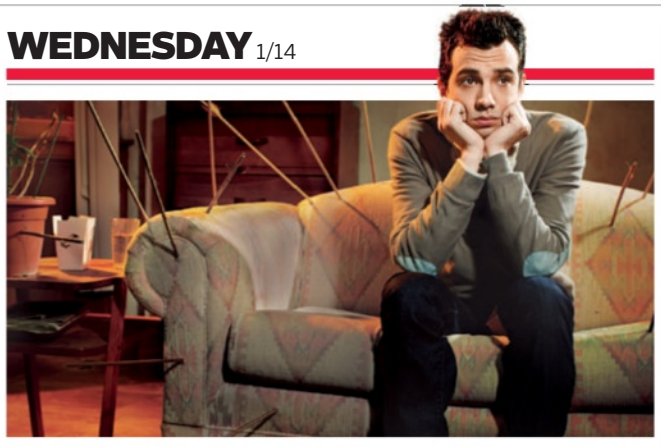
WEDNESDAY 1/14



Man Seeking Woman

TV | 10:30–11PM | *FXX*

SERIES DEBUT Television's latest attempt at a rom-com for the irony-oriented, media-saturated 18-to-34 set stars the adorkable Jay Baruchel and a clever-clever high concept: Metaphors for single nerd Josh Greenberg's romantic misadventures are presented literally, used to express, critique, or punish his attitudes. A blind date with a woman he finds as ugly as a troll? She's an actual garbage-eating troll, named Gorbachaka. Meanwhile, Baruchel is Baruchel; he either charms you or he doesn't. The surreal sequences are admirably risky and often inspired, but they also tend to drag, losing potency. The Hitler bit made me laugh hard, but I suspect *Man Seeking Woman* will be a love it/hate it proposition. It's worth a date to decide. **B** —*Jeff Jensen*

Melissa & Joey

TV | 8–8:30PM | *ABC FAMILY*

SEASON PREMIERE Melissa and Joey cancel their honeymoon in Tahiti because Mel breaks her leg. Also because *Melissa & Joey* can't afford to shoot on location in Tahiti.

black-ish

TV | 9:31–10PM | *ABC*

The Johnson family head to their annual MLK Day ski trip. From every downhill alpine slope, let freedom ring!

It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia

TV | 10–10:30PM | *FXX*

SEASON PREMIERE The gang tries to break baseball vet Wade Boggs' beer-drinking record. Sounds like they'll have to *draft* some quality *pitchers*. Eh? *Eh??*

Broad City

TV | 10:30–11PM | *COMEDY CENTRAL*

SEASON PREMIERE The first episode kicks off with a scene that qualifies as an instant classic: Abbi (Abbi Jacobson) and Ilana (Ilana Glazer) navigate the wonderful strangeness of the NYC subway, including break-dancers, tourists, and that one suspiciously empty train car. It's the city dweller's Dante's *Inferno*. From there, the best friends double down with absurd antics that would make even their season 1 selves blush. Have you ever seen a dildo get stuck in a door? You will in the virtually flawless third episode, which might be *Broad City*'s finest yet. **A**

THURSDAY 1/15

The World Dog Awards

TV | 8–10PM | *THE CW*

Hollywood throws dogs a bone with their very own awards show. (Sample category: "Most Pawpular.") Expect lots of silky manes and pup-loving presenters, including Ian Somerhalder. "The love that you get [from dogs] is worthy of an honor," host George Lopez tells EW. Just not necessarily one made of gold. "I think the trophies should be edible." —*Carolyn Todd*

The 20th Annual Critics' Choice Movie Awards

TV | 9–11PM | *A&E*

Sure to be a big night for *The Monuments Men*. Wait, that got zero nominations? Who are these "critics"?!

50 Ways to Kill Your Mother

TV | 10–11PM | *DISCOVERY LIFE*

SERIES DEBUT The brand-new Discovery Life Channel launches tonight with this show about a mom-and-son pair participating in outrageous activities, such as alligator wrestling. It will follow *Outrageous Births: Tales From the Crib* (9 p.m.). Discovery Life: Scaring the Crap Out of Moms Since 2015.

FRIDAY 1/16

Blackhat

MOVIE | R | 2 HRS., 4 MINS.

The best part about hacker movies? Hacker names! See if you can match the cyberthriller actors to their characters' *noms de hack* (answers below):

(1) **Chris Hemsworth** in *Blackhat*

(2) **Angelina Jolie** in *Hackers*

(3) **Ben Kingsley** in *Sneakers*

(4) **Seth Green** in *The Italian Job*

(5) **Keanu Reeves** in *The Matrix*

(6) **Sandra Bullock** in *The Net*

(A) Acid Burn

(B) Neo

(C) Napster

(D) Ghostman

(E) Angel

(F) Cosmo

Answers: 1-D; 2-A; 3-F; 4-C; 5-B; 6-E

The Fall

STREAMING | *NETFLIX*

SEASON PREMIERE The acclaimed U.K. drama returns with Jamie Dornan and Gillian Anderson, ushering in a golden age of *Fifty Shades of Grey*–meets–*The X-Files* fanfic.

The Wedding Ringer

MOVIE | R | 1 HR., 41 MINS.

The comedy stars Kevin Hart and Josh Gad as Will Smith in *Hitch* and Owen Wilson in *Wedding Crashers*.

MAN SEEKING WOMAN: MATTHIAS CLAMER/FXX; *IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA*: PATRICK MCELHENNEY/FX; *BROAD CITY*: COMEDY CENTRAL; HANK THE DOG: CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY IMAGES; *50 WAYS TO KILL YOUR MOTHER*: JUSTIN DOWNING; *BLACKHAT*: FRANK CONNOR; *THE FALL*: NETFLIX

Bear Watch

LEAST CUDDLY

PANDA BEAR
Panda Bear Meets the Grim Reaper

CUDDLY

PADDINGTON BEAR
Paddington

MOST CUDDLY

DANIEL FRANZESE
Looking

SATURDAY 1/17

12 Monkeys

TV | 9–10PM | *SYFY*

SERIES DEBUT Adapted from director Terry Gilliam's quantum-leaping, Bruce Willis-starring noodle cooker from 1995, Syfy's *12 Monkeys* is the latest series to cannibalize a distinctive cinematic statement for the sake of small-screen sausage. And the results are truly smaller. Like the film, a scruffy antihero from a toxic future (Aaron Stanford, appealingly unkempt) yo-yos time to stop lunatics from unleashing a viral apocalypse, and also to reboot his crummy life. Unlike in the film, the story lacks Gilliam's gonzo aesthetic and the going-bonkers perspective of its hero; the whole enterprise is reduced to its premise. The polished, muscular pilot is more concept (*Terminator* with psychos instead of robots) than substance. As far as movie-to-TV adaptations go, *12 Monkeys* is far from *Fargo*, but at least it's watchable. Yay? **B–** *—Jeff Jensen*

Paddington

MOVIE | PG | 1 HR., 29 MINS.

Based on the beloved British children's books about a bear who, by the looks of it, ate Fantastic Mr. Fox and stole his wardrobe.

Whitney

TV | 8–10PM | *LIFETIME*

Angela Bassett knows damaged divas—she turned in a classic performance as Tina Turner in 1993's *What's Love Got to Do With It*. For her directorial debut, Bassett takes on Whitney Houston, who left behind a legacy of both incredible music and all-too-credible tabloid tales when she passed away in 2012. *Whitney* opens with the ascendant Houston (Yaya DaCosta) making first contact with future husband Bobby Brown (Arlen Escarpeta) at the 1989 Soul Train Awards, and follows their tumultuous relationship from flirtation through marriage and, eventually, rehab. Too much of the story here belongs to Brown, who drinks away the pain of his fading career and the pressure of his wife's escalating fame. Bassett leaves a game DaCosta on the sidelines, only trotting her out to re-create performances that look cheap and feel alarmingly like filler. For real insight into the mercurial life of a pop sensation, *What's Love Got to Do With It* is streaming everywhere. **C** *—Kyle Anderson*

The Musketeers

TV | 9–10:15PM | *BBC AMERICA*

SEASON PREMIERE "Ah, yes, Alexandre Dumas' classic historical novel *Les Trois Mousquetaires*," said the version of you that paid attention in college.

Saturday Night Live

TV | 11:30PM–1AM | *NBC*

Kevin Hart hosts the show with musical guest Sia. We smell another "Chandelier" sketch!

Austin City Limits

TV | 9–10PM* | *PBS*

Sam Smith brings his sad songs to the Lone Star State. Advice to locals: Your barbecue Wet-Nap can double as a handkerchief. *check local listings

SUNDAY 1/18

Looking

TV | 10–10:30PM | *HBO*

Patrick and Kevin team up to develop a "gay game app" on the side. It's like other game apps except that it's impossible to win in 15 states.

Christina Milian Turned Up

TV | 10–11PM | *E!*

SERIES DEBUT The new reality show follows Milian as she "reinvigorates her music career," so this could take a while.

Grantchester

TV | 10–11PM* | *PBS*

SERIES DEBUT Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock Holmes has set a high bar for TV detectives, and PBS' latest U.K. import suffers by comparison. It doesn't help that *Grantchester* kicks off with a particularly *Sherlock*-y premise: A small-town priest (James Norton) teams with a hardened cop (Robson Green) to investigate a supposed suicide. The case is mildly intriguing, but the humdrum PI will have you Googling *Sherlock*'s return date. **C** *—Kevin P. Sullivan*

*check local listings

PANDA BEAR: FERNANDA PEREIRA; *PADDINGTON*: WEINSTEIN CO. (2); FRANZESE: ALBERT L. ORTEGA/GETTY IMAGES; *12 MONKEYS*: ALICIA GBUR/SYFY; *WHITNEY*: JACK ZEMAN; *THE MUSKETEERS*: DUSAN MARTINCEK; HART: GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GETTY IMAGES; SMITH: OWEN SWEENEY/INVISION/AP IMAGES; *CHRISTINA MILIAN TURNED UP*: JAMES DIMMOCK/E!; *GRANTCHESTER*: DES WILLIE/LOVELY DAY PRODUCTIONS & ITV FOR *MASTERPIECE*

The Bullseye

Here's a look at the pop culture news that was right on target this week—and the events that missed the mark

A very unhappy new year to whoever keeps giving her a mic

Snooki says she wants to do Broadway. Nobody told her that Broadway isn't a hot Guido from Paramus.

Pharrell reteams with N.E.R.D. for new SpongeBob movie song "Squeeze Me." Still doesn't rhyme with "hug me."

Madonna's bondage cords: the first worst accessory of 2015

Leaked Razzie Awards short list includes *Sex Tape*, *Annie*, and *The Other Woman*. So congrats on winning, Cameron Diaz.

Thanks to a new song, Kanye fans joke that he discovered Paul McCartney. In typical Kanye fashion, he didn't totally deny it.

Olivia Newton-John reunites with *Grease* costar Didi Conn. But oh, those senior niiiiights.

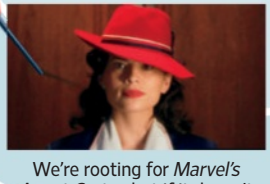
Booyah! We'll miss ya.

Internet nails Ricky Martin in death hoax, first noticing his absence when his la vida seemed just a *little* less loca.

If your resolution is to feel even guiltier about your TV pleasures, *Empire* has your back!

Foxcatcher subject Mark Schultz tweets frustration about the film, *really* hated that blue/yellow uniform.

Be honest... how many did you watch?



We're rooting for *Marvel's Agent Carter*, but if it doesn't work out, there's always the Carmen Sandiego biopic.

At last, a new season of *D-Listers Learn PowerPoint*

Sam Raimi admits he "messed up" *Spider-Man 3*, finally taking that "great power, great responsibility" thing into consideration.

Sylvester Stallone announces *Rambo 5* title, sadly ignoring Bullseye's suggestion of *Rambo: Early-Bird Discount*.

SNOOKI: TAYLOR HILL/GETTY IMAGES; *DOWNTON ABBEY*: NICK BRIGGS/MASTERPIECE; KANYE WEST: TOMMASO BODDI/GETTY IMAGES FOR *DUJOUR*; MCCARTNEY: EVAN AGOSTINI/INVISION/AP; NEWTON-JOHN AND CONN: DAVID BECKER/WIREIMAGE.COM; *EMPIRE*: CHUCK HODES/FOX; FOXCATCHER: SCOTT GARFIELD; STALLONE: LION'S GATE/COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION; *FRIENDS*: JON RAGEL/NBC/NBCU PHOTO BANK VIA GETTY IMAGES; MARTIN: EVAN AGOSTINI/AP IMAGES; STUART SCOTT; LANDOY; *ANNIE*: BARRY WETCHER; PHARRELL: SPLASH NEWS; JENNY MCCARTHY: GETTY IMAGES FOR DCP

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